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[ΕΓΓΙΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ ΚΑΤΑ ΜΑΤΘΑΙΟΝ.]

THE GOSPEL

ACCORDING TO

MATTHEW EXPOUNDED.

BY

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INTRODUCTION.

THE Gospel is in advance of the age ; it ever has been, and it ever will be. Since there is but "one faith,"* the faith of one generation should be that of another, yet it is not.

In the Gospel we trace a harmony neither in chronological order, or arrangement of facts ; nor in a connexion of words, or historical details ; but in the eternal and never-varying principles shadowed forth and typified from the beginning.

The truth is not fragmentary, nor shut up in a few isolated passages. It consists not in certain speculations about God, in a scheme of notions or opinions, a system of philosophy, or a certain theory of life and conduct, but in a manifestation of God to man, according to his eternal purpose. The Bible is a revelation of a spiritual world, which expresses itself in ways and means *sui generis*. Its scribes are "pens of a ready writer,"† instruments in the hand of God, channels of communication to their fellow-men. They retain what was peculiar to them, yet possess the Spirit of Christ. By them the events and incidents in the life of Jesus are so recorded, that the outward and visible are always subservient to the invisible and spiritual, in which alone the sequence and harmony of the truth are found.

In order to a clear apprehension of the Word of God, we must never lose sight of the fact that it reveals not only *another world*, but also the *first Adam and the last*, between whom there can be no concord. The old Adam, with all its surroundings, can never be other than what it is—a body of death, of sin, of corruption, though it be exhorted to possess

* Eph. iv. 5 ; Heb. xi.

† Ps. xlv. 1.

faith, and to discipline itself in a religious habit. It can never possess the Spirit of life, for at its best it is only "a broken cistern that can hold no water,"* whereas all men are, through the grace of God, related to the last Adam—that is, Christ, the man created after God, whom, we, having put on, not only put off in him the old Adam, but also possess a quickening Spirit, even the Spirit of the Son.

Thus, while maintaining in its intense reality the personality of Christ the Son of God, in whom is revealed the glory of the Father, we identify him with all men in a death to sin—for we thus judge, if one died for all, then all died—and life to God, that all may identify themselves with him.† That as all are identified with the first Adam, so may they be with the last, and being conformed to his image, possess a *condition* accordingly. This is the unity of which Christ spoke; the utterances of men, however, are almost universally discordant.

In Christ Jesus, in him alone, must the Scriptures, in their unbroken connexion, be interpreted; but if we take the ground of the old Adam, not only is truth fragmentary, but the Scriptures, from the very nature of things, must be perverted.

We must then interpret the Word according to the *whole* of the Lord's teaching—according to the eternal principles of holiness and love, the operating laws of judgment and righteousness respectively, and thus according to the names Christ Jesus, names which express him, who is given a covenant to the people.

With this covenant of a Triune God we must begin. It is the *ultima ratio* of all things. It has been from the beginning, and has had its witnesses throughout all time;§ and Matthew throughout assumes our knowledge of it.

* Jer. ii. 13.

† Eph. iv. 22, 24.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

§ Heb. xi. 1, &c.

CHAPTER I.

1 THE book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

2 Abraham begat Isaac ; and Isaac begat Jacob ; and Jacob begat Judas
3 and his brethren ; and Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar ; and
4 Phares begat Esrom ; and Esrom begat Aram ; and Aram begat Aminadab ;
5 and Aminadab begat Naasson ; and Naasson begat Salmon ; and Salmon begat
Booz of Rachab ; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth ; and Obed begat Jesse ;
6 and Jesse begat David the king.

And David the king begat Solomon of her *that had been the wife* of Urias ;
7 and Solomon begat Roboam ; and Roboam begat Abia ; and Abia begat
8 Asa ; and Asa begat Josaphat ; and Josaphat begat Joram ; and Joram
9 begat Ozias ; and Ozias begat Joatham ; and Joatham begat Achaz ; and
10 Achaz begat Ezekias ; and Ezekias begat Manasses ; and Manasses begat
11 Amon ; and Amon begat Josias ; and Josias begat Jechonias and his
brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon.

12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel ; and
13 Salathiel begat Zorobabel ; and Zorobabel begat Abiud ; and Abiud begat
14 Eliakim ; and Eliakim begat Azor ; and Azor begat Sadoc ; and Sadoc
15 begat Achim ; and Achim begat Eliud ; and Eliud begat Eleazar ; and
16 Eleazar begat Matthan ; and Matthan begat Jacob ; and Jacob begat
Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called
Christ.

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David *are* fourteen 'generations ;
and from David until the carrying away into Babylon *are* fourteen genera-
tions ; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ *are* fourteen
generations.

18 NOW the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise : When as his mother
Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found
19 with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just
man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her
20 away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the
Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David,
fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife : for that which is conceived in
21 her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt
call his name JESUS : for he shall save his people from their sins.

22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the
23 Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and
shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which
being interpreted is, God with us.

24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had
25 bidden him, and took unto him his wife : and knew her not till she had
brought forth her firstborn son : and he called his name JESUS.

1. THE revelation of the Bible is that of the covenant of God. It is the book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham. No verse can be found more comprehensive than this with which the Gospel begins. There is indeed one equal to it—that with which it terminates: “These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life *in his name*.”

The term “generation” has no connexion with the imperfect genealogy which follows. Fruitless indeed have been the labours, and unsatisfactory the controversies raised upon the two independent statements of the Lord’s earthly descent. What, then, are we to understand by the term “generation?” It will be of little moment what men in general may understand by it, but it is all important to know what the inspired writers who used it intended it to signify. It is more than a begetting, a production, a succession, or an age. We read (Gen. x. 1 & 31, 32) “These are the generations of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations.” Again: “This is the book of the generations of Adam.” (Gen. v. 1.) Two different successions of descent are then given: one through Cain, the other through Seth; that characteristic of those who resist God, this of those who call upon his name; the former making progress in the world, the latter in the knowledge of the true God. Thus the term is applied to both these lines of succession as representing the distinctive characteristics of the whole human family: one part living in and to the flesh and visible things; the other, in the Spirit and to invisible. The term, then, signifies not only existence, but also the nature of it. Noah was a righteous man, and perfect or blameless in his generations. (Gen. vi. 9.) He renounced all unrighteousness, and was righteous—dead to sin, the world,

and the flesh, and one with God, with whom he walked. The covenant is with all flesh. So, all are redeemed, all are in the ark whether they be such as Ham or no: honouring or dishonouring the true Father. If, "then, any man be a hearer and not a doer of the Word, he is like unto a man beholding the face of his *generation* in a glass: for he *beholdeth himself*, and straightway goeth his way, and forgetteth what manner of man he was." (Jas. i. 23, 24.) Speaking of the tongue he says, It is a fire, a world of iniquity that defileth the whole body and setteth on fire the course of *this generation*. This term, then, applied to the Lord Jesus Christ, had respect to what he really was. The name Jesus is the contracted form of Jehoshua—Jehovah, a saviour. So, is he the Son of David the Son of Abraham. He reveals the covenant which Matthew, a converted Jew, now distinctly brings before us, and of which, in the use of these names, Matthew assumes our knowledge from the beginning. Peter confessed them (ch. xvi. 16); Jesus himself, in one of his most important teachings, testified to them (ch. xxii. 42, 43); and in his condemnation and death they were abundantly witnessed to.

Jehovah, the I AM, the name of the One God, is a consuming fire, and must, as the ever present ONE, put from him all that is not of himself. Christ came in all the power of Jehovah, he revealed him, and since David was a man after God's own heart, as he destroyed *all his enemies*, Jehovah was pleased to honour this name; and so Son of David and Christ are identical. Then, as the Son of the living God, he is called the Son of Abraham, which appellation signifies that the Father is *the Father of a multitude*. Thus, Jesus as the Son of David reveals Jehovah destroying every enemy, and as the Son of Abraham he reveals him as the Father of the spirits of all flesh. And accordingly Matthew makes repeated reference to multitudes, showing thereby the universal tendency of the Gospel.

Now, in the light of these two names, "Son of David, Son of Abraham," as revealed in Christ the Son of the living God, all holy men lived, walked, and wrote. And as we take their ground, without which we cannot interpret their writings, we see how they used all nature and all science as giving *expression* to the everlasting truths to which these two names witness. This ground, then, must be taken that we may not only see, but also

understand with the writer the spiritual and everlasting truths of the kingdom. And thus guided and limited by these names, we guard against the mischievous error of making outward things express themselves in spiritual, instead of seeing how spiritual things express themselves by outward and visible; and so ascribes built up into the kingdom of the heavens, we bring forth out of our treasure things new and old.

Before we pass on, it will not be unprofitable briefly to refer to some of the important truths implied in these two appellations of the Lord Jesus. 1st. The Covenant. What is the Covenant? Briefly stated, it is the purpose of the Father to reveal himself by the Son, through the Spirit. Jehovah thus reveals himself. He has therefore created two races of beings—angels and men—so to witness to him. *The elder to serve the younger*; which is no arbitrary decree, but exists in the nature of things. No relative duty which ultimately rests in the will of God can be disparaging or irksome—far from it; for the will of God is its law. To reveal the Father is the Son of David the Son of Abraham come. He reveals him—the true David, the true Abraham. The true David slays all his enemies, overthrows all that is not of the covenant; and the true Abraham blesses all the families of the earth, for in him *they are blessed*. Thus is Jesus Christ given as a covenant to the people and according to his generation.

These terms are just those which a true Jew, one understanding the covenant, would use. They imply all that the term Melchizedek implies, which is simply, King, Righteousness. Melchizedek is one of the most extraordinary personages met with in the Word of God. He witnesses to those truths and principles which lie embedded in the whole plain of revelation, and which crop out here and there in some more or less prominent form. Much misapprehension in respect of him besets those who take the literal sense, or who detach incidents which are in fact but the coming into clearer manifestation of those intense and eternal principles and realities found in every part of the Word of God.

The next subject is Sin. What is Sin? It is of the nature of Satan. It is of him and stands to him in a relation like that of the woman to the man. (See chap. viii. 1, & xiii. 19.) Man was

originally created in a relation to God, like that of the woman to the man, a receptivity for the fulness of deity. His glorious destiny was from the beginning to be one with God, in one Spirit with the Lord. Satan destroyed this relation by defiling the pure and holy vessel created for God, and making it after, and for himself. Such is the old Adam nature, which is ever reproducing itself. This corrupt old nature is the sad heritage of all men. Man being thus identified with sin ever lusts after, and is one with Satan. It is *the condition of the fall*. This old Adam nature, with all its education, discipline, blandishments, is ever the same, and brings forth after its own likeness. (Jas. i. 15.)

Now, Christ is come to destroy *the works of the devil*—to bear away the sin of the world, and to cast out the prince of it; therefore man, being restored, may stand to God in Christ, the last Adam, *in the relation* in which he was originally created in the first Adam. Ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ (for the old Adam does try to obey an outward law), that ye should be married to another, to him who is raised from the dead, that ye should bring *forth fruit unto God*. (Rom. vii. 4: 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.) So long as the old Adam nature, in any man, lives—is uncrucified—the law holds him in dominion. (Rom. vii. 1.) Satan will assume any guise to provoke the lust of the depraved nature, and what does not the old Adam lust to do? It obeys its lord, its head, even Satan, who holds it in dominion, even as the wife obeys her husband in the law of his relation. The old Adam hates the cross of Christ. It hates to be crucified that sin may be destroyed, that lust may be put away and Satan resisted. The whole human family is, before God, divided into only two classes:—those, who are still in the old Adam, who walk after the flesh, in whom the law of sin and death works; or those, who are dead with Christ to sin and alive to God, in whom the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus works. And their experience confirms the Apostle's teaching: the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and *these are contrary the one to the other that ye may not*, whether in the flesh or in the Spirit, do the things ye would. When in the Spirit, the things we would do after the Spirit, the flesh lusts against; and when in the flesh and walking after the flesh, the things we would do after the flesh, the gracious Spirit lusts against. If,

then, we walk after the Spirit *in Christ Jesus*, we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.

The next subject upon which we would briefly touch is that of the Church. What is the Church? The Roman Catholic believes in a visible head and a visible body as the Church of God. The faith of the Protestant is but little removed from that of the Roman Catholic, as *he also believes in a visible body*, as the body of "Jesus dying as a penalty to satisfy the justice of God." But does such a faith constitute him a member of the mystical body of Christ, which is the Church? It is indeed appointed unto all men once to die and then the judgment, which will be the condemnation of sin, when the filthy will be filthy still, and the holy will be holy still. But Christ is come in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, and has put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. His death was the judgment of the world, and the casting out of the prince of it. Temporal death then, to him *who understands the death of Christ*, will be gain—it will be a separation outwardly from that, from which he is already separated in a deeper and truer condition of death in Christ; while to him who knows not Christ, death will be *the sign* of a deeper and more awful separation: in the judgment after death—in the second death, as the Apostle says—we are a savour of death *unto death* to them that perish. So, then, there are two aspects of temporal death, different to him who is in Christ Jesus and to him who is not. And so there are of the death of Christ; men believe in an outward dying of Jesus, in him as dying to all that was visible, which was *only a sign, and one that would be spoken against*. (Luke, ii. 34.) Jesus in his outward death died to an accursed state, which was such even as he hang on a tree. This condition of his hanging on a tree was a true representation of man, who is of the tree *of the knowledge* of good and evil, *which is sin*, an accursed condition. To be nailed to this tree is to be one with sin accursed before God. Such was Jesus who, then, *being dead in sin*, in the judgment of his God, who continueth holy, died to sin. But the outward and visible was only a sign. Jesus was made sin, trod the wine-press of the wrath of God alone, and in the awful judgment of a holy God, whereby he put away sin, he died to sin, of which his resurrection was the witness; he cast out the prince of this world, he purged away the

sin of the world. The death of Christ, then, was not a penalty as a condonation for sin, but a spiritual and *invisible* death to sin.

Thus the Church is an invisible body, of which Christ is the invisible head. It has fellowship with his sufferings, is crucified with him, and is with him dead to sin: *for in him* the wrath of God was poured out to the uttermost against sin; and sin died, was crucified, for he died *once unto sin* a true and perfect holocaust. They, then, who have suffered in the flesh have ceased from sin, are of the body of Christ, the fulness of him that filleth all and in all. (Eph. i. 23.)

The spouse of Christ, according to the teaching and belief of a large denomination of Christians, is a visible body; according to those of another, an invisible. This is said to consist of those who believe that Jesus died a *penalty* to satisfy the *justice* of God—both unscriptural terms. Whereas the Church consists only of those who present the *good* ground for the incorruptible seed. Since God has gathered all under one head in Christ, both those which are in the heavens, and those which are on the earth (Eph. i. 10)—that is, restored angels and men to their true relation, the former to serve the latter, the elder to serve the younger (Heb. ii. 5, 7)—there is but one body, and that a spiritual body, a fit receptivity for the fulness of God. (Eph. iii. 19: Col. ii. 6—9.) If, then, we have put off the old Adam, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and have put on the last Adam, created after God in holiness of the truth (Eph. iv. 24)—for if any man be *in Christ* he is a new creation—old things have passed away, and behold all things are become new—we present the one body, the good ground for the incorruptible seed, as there are but one body and one Spirit, according as we are called. (Eph. iv. 4: John, i. 13.)

Here it will not be out of place to make a few remarks on faith. There is but one faith, which is a living faith. It is the substance to which all the shadows point, and which gives existence to those shadows. It is the substance which has been possessed from the beginning, and with which the shadows could in nowise interfere. Holy men, throughout the history of the world, possessed this substance. Its nature is illustrated by creation:—things which are seen were made of things which *do not appear*. (Heb. xi. 3.) What, then, is the truth for which we contend, and with

which we enter upon the interpretation of the Word of God? It is the truth which Christ ever taught, but which is not now taught. It is the truth that must be embraced in order to understand the lives and writings of holy men. The call of God is, "Obey the truth in Christ," in whom the old Adam is withered to its very roots, so that no fruit can grow on it henceforward for ever (ch. xxi. 19). Whereas the orthodoxy of the day not only commits a fatal error in calling upon the *old Adam to do something*; but it would make the less to include the greater—an absurdity. The covenant of God includes the whole work of the Lord Jesus, but a systematic Theology lays down an unscriptural dogma upon which it builds, and in which it includes all that pertains to the covenant of God. Now, in faith we embrace the substance according to the names Christ Jesus—Son of David, Son of Abraham. We possess God in Christ, and we demonstrate this invisible substance by our works which are seen, and which are not of the old Adam which appears, but of God in Christ who appears not. (Col. iii. 1 & 3: John, iii. 21.)

The Lord, in his controversy with Nicodemus, taught him that he who doeth truth, in whom the truth works, cometh to the light, and makes manifest that his works are wrought not "by man and God with him, but by God or in God, man being crucified." Many teachers in Israel, may, like Nicodemus, hear the reproof of Jesus, "Art thou a teacher in Israel and knowest not these things?"

Jehovah, then, in Christ has put away sin, and in the Spirit of the Son is our righteousness. He is not only the sin-offering, but also our righteousness, our inheritance. (Ezek. xliv. 27, 28.) When thus we are one with Christ the Son of the living God, possess in him the sin-offering and the inheritance, first trust in Christ, and then are sealed with the Spirit of promise, (Eph. i. 12, 13,) we are reconciled to God, we have the atonement, we possess a vital godly faith.

There is no statement in the Word of God that "Christ died as a penalty to satisfy the justice of God," nor can it be implied from any statement in it. He died but once, and then unto sin. (Heb. ix. 26.) He was made sin, made in the likeness of *sinful flesh*, so was one with us, dead to God in enmity, and accursed. The judgment of God must follow the curse. If we

are in the flesh we are under the curse, and obnoxious to the wrath of a holy God; but if we are in Christ—know Christ crucified, and so live him, we have passed from condemnation. Jesus made sin, so dying the accursed death, could pay no penalty for us; much less would such a death be redemption. Accursed, he was dead, hence his passion; then when he died on the tree, he died to sin, and so the atonement for all men, as he put away the sin of the world. Being sin he trod the wine-press of the wrath of God for all men. Then did the holiness of God come forth in all its strength against the fellow of Jehovah. Then, Jesus having put away the sin of the world, no man was to be called common or unclean, *and so he met the righteousness of God*, and we are no longer sin unto Satan, but holiness unto Jehovah.

There is but one righteousness, that of God in Christ. It follows judgment, and is in the Holy Ghost—the Spirit of the Son. (Rom. xiv. 17; viii. 2.) We are in the Spirit of the Son brought nigh, and know the righteous Father. (Matt. xi. 27: John xvii. 25.) This righteousness is imputed to all men, since Jesus was delivered because of our offences, and raised again because of our being *made righteous*. (Rom. iv. 25.) Therefore should every one in faith be dead to sin and alive to God, yielding his members as instruments of righteousness.

The law of righteousness, the law of the Spirit of life, is one operating principle—love. God is love, and if we have not this law of righteousness, though we may have everything else, we are nothing. (1 Cor. xiii. 1, &c.) And this must be from the very nature of things.

If there was a period in the history of the world when men thought less, and therefore considered less the eternal verities of the kingdom of God, it is the present. However, in confirming our statement that there is but one righteousness, and it is JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, whom we possess in all the fulness of God in Christ Jesus, we need bring but one passage.

The Lord asked the Jews, What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is he? And the writer to the Christian Jews says, Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession. (Heb. iii. 1, &c.) The Apostle, the Sent of God, is Christ; the High Priest, to bless with all that is of the Father, is Jesus the Son of God. To partake of

Christ is the beginning (Heb. iii. 14), and then to know the Son—in whom is life—is the completion of our profession (iv. 14). He further explains, Christ glorified not himself to be made a High Priest, (v. 5) ; for the law of Christ is the emptying of self. (Phil. ii. 8.) Then having died and put away all that would exalt itself, the Father constituted him a High Priest to bless with all that is of the Father, saying, Thou art my Son, *this day* have I begotten thee : which truths, in their relative order and signification, are expressed by the one appellation Melchizedek—King, Righteousness. (Heb. v. 6.) As Christ he is King, as the Son he is Righteousness, and we partaking of him are made kings and priests unto God for ever. Wherefore the great Apostle to the Gentiles exhorted the Philippians to have the mind which was in Christ Jesus ; for to me, he says, to live is Christ (i. 21). He further explained, “I count all things as dung that I may win Christ, *and be found in him*, not having my own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness *which is of God*, by faith.” So he possesses Melchizedek.

Matthew then gathers up in these two distinctive appellations—Son of David, Son of Abraham, the whole Gospel. According to them, in them, and from them, is the whole Gospel to be interpreted.

2—15. He now introduces the genealogy. And we must not forget that, while reading earthly things, he is setting forth the everlasting covenant of a Triune God. If we understand his use of the appellations Son of David, Son of Abraham, as equivalent to Melchizedek, who puts away all that is not of the Father, and blesses a multitude with all that is, we shall understand his beginning the genealogy with Abraham as the type of the everlasting Father ; and so tracing it from father to son. Then from David, *the King*. Showing thereby a father and a kingdom. These truths were the foundation of the Jews’ national existence ; they witnessed to them. But it should never be forgotten that the twelve tribes as the children of the covenant, even as the twelve sons of Israel, the children of Jacob, of Isaac, of Abraham, *represent the whole human family partakers of the covenant*.

Jehovah is a Father blessing us, and a King overthrowing every enemy, that he may bless us with all the fulness of himself. He is revealed in Jesus Christ. Having thus set before us him, who

is the true centre of our being, the source and channel of all blessings for time and for eternity, Matthew introduces four women, moral outcasts—the incestuous Tamar, the harlot Rahab, the adulteress Bath-Sheba, and Ruth the daughter of an accursed race. These four women represent all men in their true condition, short of the glory of God, utterly depraved, who, through the King, by union with him through the Spirit, of which marriage is the symbol, are now restored to dignity and to honour.

The mystic number 4, represents creature life, so *all flesh*. God says my covenant is with all flesh. Paul distinguishes four kinds as he says, All flesh is not the same flesh; for there is one flesh of men, another of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. Our minds are familiarised with this number as representing all creation; so we speak of the four winds of heaven, the four seasons of the year, the four corners of the earth. Thus, the wind in all time and in all places, as the atmosphere of life, is a testimony to the universal covenant. Three, the number of the Trinity, four of all flesh = seven of the covenant. While twelve signifies the covenant a reality; and thus, the twelve sons of Israel, the twelve tribes, and the twelve apostles, in their several and respective dispensations, are outward testimonies to the universal covenant of God made with all flesh.

16. Of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ—the true Melchizedek (ch. xxii. 42). It is said of Melchizedek that he is *αγενσαλογητος*—without genealogy, without descent, therefore he must be independent of the literal genealogy from Abraham to Joseph. The two genealogies are generally admitted to be those of Joseph, who, and not Mary, is spoken of as of the house and lineage of David. Mary's descent is never hinted at. If it were, it would doubtless be found, from her relation to her cousin Elizabeth, to be of the tribe of Levi.

Laying aside the descent of Mary as of little moment, it may be assumed that that of Joseph is kept in view in both accounts. In Matthew, notwithstanding the omissions, the lineal descent; in Luke, the legal, according to Deut. xxv. 5—10, or Numb. xxvii. 8—11.

In support of Matthew's as the lineal descent, Joseph is called Son of David, and in tracing the descent, a term is used which is

never otherwise used than as expressive of actual descent from father to son.

17. In the genealogy the covenant is set forth in the Father, Son, and Spirit, with the most degraded brought into union and oneness with God. Matthew now divides the genealogy into three tessera-decades, or fourteen generations. Fourteen being a multiple of seven, is not without its signification: $7 \times 2 = 14$ is *thrice* repeated—similarly, the twenty-four elders, $12 \times 2 = 24$. (Rev. iv. 4.) In the 14 we read the covenant according to its two principles, while the thrice repetition points to the Three Persons of that covenant. But the important truth evident is, that the thrice repeated number, as three equal numbers, attest the co-equality of the Three Persons. That these divisions of time or period in the national history of the Jews, attest the Three Persons in the Trinity is clear enough if we but consider them. The Father is revealed in Abraham and his posterity, though rejected by the people. By and from David, the King is revealed, though ignored in the shadow itself, and the people are carried away captive into Babylon. And then the Spirit is revealed in a return to the promised land after a deliverance from Babylon, though it be resisted in a carnal counterfeit of the truth.

This order is not accidental—others correspond to it. The covenant exists, and created things must attest it. Thus, in the Christian dispensation—from the day of Pentecost to the period of universal defection, when the sword went forth in the sword of Mahomet, was the patristic period; from the overthrow of the Saracen power and the revivifying of Christianity to mediæval darkness, when the sun of righteousness was obscured, was the kingly period; and lastly, from the Reformation until faith shall cease from the earth, is the spiritual period—the spiritual part of the spiritual dispensation. Such divisions are of a still wider range. All time attests the covenant Three. From Adam to Moses is the patriarchal period; from Moses to the day of Pentecost, the legal is fulfilled in Christ the King; from Pentecost to the end of time is the spiritual.

There is a yet wider range—one not limited by time. From creation to redemption the Father is prominently revealed; from redemption, or the coming forth of Jesus to the laying down of all rule, authority, and power, and the complete overthrow of every

enemy, the King is revealed ; and lastly, the glorious consummation in the grace which is to come—the full manifestation of the Spirit, when God will be all and in all. These periods find their expression in the life of man :—from infancy to dawning manhood, he is led and guided ; from manhood to mature age, he manfully fights and overcomes not only his inward lusts and desires, but also the temptations of the world ; and lastly, he settles down in mellowed and matured old age in the full blessing of peace. While this order distinguishes the *characteristic* features of each Person of the Trinity, yet they severally so work as not to exclude either of the others. Thus all time, all creation, and all men are *impressed* with the fundamental truths of the covenant of a Triune God.

Thus Matthew, while apparently giving a very remarkable genealogy, is, in truth, setting forth the great spiritual verities which lie at the foundation of the Gospel, and which his scripture unfolds.

Matthew teaches the universal tendency of the Gospel not only at the beginning but also at the end. He shows how the covenant is made with all flesh, even with man in his most degraded condition, in separation from God. And he concludes with the simple yet expressive command of Christ, “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and lo I am with you to the end of the world.”

The revelation of the Father in the manifestation of the true King, overthrowing all adverse power, and the Holy Ghost blessing man, is the Gospel. The kingdom is a reality. To be in it and of it, Christ Jesus must dwell in us as our King and impart to us of his Spirit—the Spirit of the Son, which is our righteousness—an earnest of our inheritance of glory.

The genealogy being imperfect, though accurate in what it states of the lineal descent, indicates that an earthly history is not its object, nor that an earthly kingdom is set up or restored. The prophecy of Jeremiah (xii. 30) bears out this. The prophet, perceiving the degradation of his nation, exclaims with holy indignation, O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord. Write this man childless—יָרֵיץ desolate, solitary, forsaken, or naked, divested of the robe of his high office—a man who

shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Jerusalem. Jechonias, the last of the kings, had eight sons and a long line of posterity, yet none of his descendants was to inherit the throne of David and transmit the honours of his house.

Joseph, distinctly called the son of David, died in obscurity, yet his Son Jesus comes forth as the true King, and transmits to all, who obey him and overcomes as he overcame, his dignity, making them kings and priests unto God to share his throne for ever.

So long as we ignore the truth that the Bible sets before us two kingdoms as actually present—a visible and invisible—we shall find it impossible to reconcile prophecies such as these. The seed of Jechonias shall not inherit the throne of David, while the seed of David shall. Jechonias, like Esau, lived to the flesh, but David, like Jacob, lived in the blessing, and was crucified to the flesh.

That the throne of David was an invisible one is evident from the words of Peter: "David being a prophet knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his loins according to the flesh, would he raise up Christ to sit on his throne." He, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ. The visible royalty was not only the representative of the invisible—the shadow of the true—but it drew its existence from the reality. This David knew and realised. He, as a man after God's own heart, realised the true kingdom. Otherwise he could not have triumphed over his enemies, he could not have done the will of God. When he suffered these enemies to overcome him—when he yielded to the creature—he sinned against God and Christ. He saw it, he understood it, he felt it, in all its terrible reality; and in the deep anguish of his soul there went forth but one bitter wail, "Against thee only have I done this evil." Every ruler should rule in the spirit and power of Melchizedek. Jechonias never witnessed to this kingdom. Hence his desolation and the denunciation of God's anger. Yet, there was to be one of the loins of David according to the flesh that should sit *on David's throne*. David's throne was the manifestation of the invisible. "David seeing this before spake of

the resurrection of Christ that his soul was not left in Hades, neither did his flesh see corruption." Such was David's throne, overthrowing principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness. It was a spiritual throne, yet one according to the flesh should sit on it, against whom neither death, the grave, nor Hades could prevail. On this he now sits at the right hand of power, ruling over all until all his enemies are made his footstool. And this is the Christ the Son of Mary.

"Of the loins of David, according to the flesh, should One come to sit on this throne." Joseph was but the reputed father of Christ. And, as Mary was, doubtless, not of the tribe of Judah, the seed could not be derived from her. Joseph, as the descendant of Jechonias, could not sit on this throne, but as the son of David he might. Jechonias knew only a visible throne, David only the invisible. When the true "Son of David" came, he put away all that in which Jechonias rested, and revealed the true.

18. "Now the generation, the producing of Jesus Christ was in this way, &c." Joseph, the lineal descendant of the house of David, is betrothed to Mary, which betrothal was, in the sight of God, a marriage though not consummated. They were truly one flesh. Before they come together she conceives and is found with child by the Holy Ghost. Is this beyond nature? Or is it not nature in its truest form? May we not here learn how in truth God is the Father of the spirits of all flesh—that while he uses ordinary means he is not dependent on them? According to the marriage, Jesus is of the loins of David, but *the generation* not being in the ordinary way, he does not inherit the common taint. Yet, who shall say that it is not nature in its truest form? John begins his Gospel by setting forth the Word. Now what is true of the Word must be true of Jesus. The Word of God is the incorruptible seed. By the term seed is implied the law of all seeds. Except a corn of wheat fall *into the earth and die* it abideth alone, *but if it die*, it is *not alone*, and brings forth much fruit. So Jesus comes forth—Joseph being only the reputed father—begotten of the Holy Ghost. And thus it is, that, while observing the law of all seeds, putting away that which is of the one and taking that which is of the other, he comes forth without the taint of sin.

19. Joseph, *a righteous man*—one in the full blessings of the covenant—discovering Mary's condition, meditates divorcing her, intending to put her away privily, when it is revealed to him in a dream that what is begotten in her is of the Holy Ghost. We are here taught what God is ever doing in the conception of every child, how that life is of Him. It was said to Eve, after the fall, and before she had conceived, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception." Sorrow and conception intimate the two correlative principles of the covenant. They are the laws of germination. "That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die." (1 Cor. xv. 36.) This dying is expressed by the sorrow, and the quickening is the conception. So the ground being cursed must be subdued before it can have in it the blessing of life. In a death to all—that is, of the creature—the old Adam is put away, and life comes forth. This law is seen again in childbirth. Sorrow is the breaking up of the house of bondage and darkness, and then comes forth life into liberty. What is thus true physically, and all life bears witness to it, is also true spiritually—as Paul writes, "Sin was dead and I was alive once without the law," that is, before he was circumcised. Every child then, in conception and in birth, witnesses not only to redemption, but also to the paternity of God. Children are, in truth, like arrows in the hand of a giant, irresistible arguments for the truth, against all the lying assaults of the arch enemy. O Jehovah our Adonai, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies. (Ps. viii. 1, 2.) The name is Jehovah-Adonai—Christ the Lord (Matt. xxii. 42), to whom babes and sucklings bear testimony.

In the case of the Lord Jesus the generation was thus:—a dispensing with the ordinary means; hence, there was no taint and no necessity for death before conception, for he was begotten of the Holy Ghost, and a body was prepared him. So, a child is born, a Son is given. If, then, during the betrothal of Joseph and Mary a child is begotten and born in the only way whereby it can escape the common taint of our sinful and corrupt nature, can any one assert that it is not of the loins of David?—not within the promise of all that is intended in connexion with that formula?

The Lord Jesus never speaks of his conception and birth as being anything supernatural. Whereas, they were the most natural, the most truly human in avoiding the taint ; while those of all others have been the most unnatural and inhuman—man communicating to his own offspring the elements of sin and death. But we all are the offspring of God, in whom we live, move, and have our being, which we are to realise in the power and in the Spirit of Melchizedek.

God is our Father, the true Abraham in whom all the families of the earth are blessed. And our children are given as pledges and representatives of that far higher and better life which is in Christ Jesus—a life without the stamp or impress of death. Therefore must we continually die to sin: “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” (John xii. 24.) We die in Christ. The soul thus purged is not alone, being one with God, and it bears fruit accordingly. So, are we the children of *promise* as Isaac was; for that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die. In the womb of the earth, the seed deposited perishes, then it is not alone, and life comes forth unfettered. Thus *all* germination represents our resurrection life, which the Christian realises now on earth—so is he translated from darkness into light. It is *the normal* condition of every child born in the world, although throughout his earthly career he may have a consciousness of a body of sin and death; but which to live to and to follow, is death, is *to cut oneself off* from the covenant mercies of God.

We are now brought to the consideration of a name that is above every name, and at which every knee shall bow of things in heaven, of things on earth, and things under the earth, and confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father. This name of Jesus is, Jehovah shall save—he shall save his people from their sins: a form that implies a full and perfect salvation, not only in a deliverance from sin, but also in a blessing according to the full purpose of the Father, and according to his name.

Jesus, then, as Jehovah, destroys all his enemies, and as the true Son he blesses with all that is of the Father. Therefore, until we obey the truth in the full blessing of the Father according to the name Jesus—Jehovah destroying every enemy, and “JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS,” with which Christ, the Son of

the living God, are respectively identified—we are not delivered from our sins. But if this name is to us above every name, it is so because we, signified by the bending of the knee, have humbled ourselves under the mighty hand, the redeeming arm of Jehovah, and then are one in Spirit with the Son, and so call Jesus Lord (Ps. xlv. 2 ; cx. 1), to the glory of God the Father.

The bringing forth of a Son, and calling his name Jesus, because he was according to this name, was the fulfilment of a very remarkable prophecy—one of, if not the most precious in the Word of God. And here we remark, as applicable to all predictions of the advent of Jesus, that they existed only as shadows which the substance had cast before ; so, then, they were fulfilled only by the coming of the substance.

Turning to the prophecy referred to (Is. vii.—ix.), we learn that there are two kingdoms—Jehovah's and Satan's ; and however this may find its representative in the confederacies of evil, Jehovah will reveal his. The name of Jesus, then, implies that of Immanuel, God with us. Since Matthew distinctly states this, any one can assent to it ; but is he understood ? Have they who read this record a clear apprehension of what the writer means by bringing this name, and specially mentioning it, in connexion with the prophecy referred to ? If we understand not the Prophet, how shall we the Evangelist ? If we understand not the prediction, how shall we the fulfilment of it ? We look in vain for a calm, unbiassed, intelligent exposition of the written covenant of God.

The name Immanuel, even as the name Jesus, is to be interpreted by the names of Shear-jashub and Maher-shalal-hash-baz, the two sons of the prophet Isaiah. In this prophecy (chaps. vii.—ix.) there is an outward representation of the truth of God “*after the manner of Egypt.*” (Is. x. 24.) Thus God is continually revealing himself, and his footsteps may accordingly be traced in all his providential dealings with every one of us.

The Jews were in their relation to all men vessels of honour, outward representatives of the covenant ; even as it was expressed and signified in Jacob when *his flesh shrank*, and he obtained *the blessing*. The Jews, then, were God's people, as separated from all flesh. This was “the manner of Egypt”—the Egyptians as vessels of dishonour, represented the condition of all flesh, and so all

perished in the waters of the Red Sea, and Israel then came up *as a spiritual seed* to serve God in the wilderness. There is, then, in every man these two natures, the carnal and the spiritual, and if the latter is to be, to exist according to the covenant a spiritual seed, the former must be dead and buried, else we cannot serve God. This is the one and inflexible truth that meets us at the beginning of the world's history, and continues on to the end of time. It was revealed in the waters of the flood, and the saving of Noah and *his family*; afterwards in the waters of the Red Sea, and the deliverance of Israel; then in the deportation of the ten tribes, and Judah remaining; and described in the striking imagery of Is. x. 16—22 & xi. 1—5.

Isaiah had to testify to Jehovah of hosts as the true David, the true King (vi. 5); also, that he is a Father, which runs throughout the prophecy—a child is born, a Son is given. He also witnesses to the purpose of God towards his people. The land is to be without inhabitant, *desolate with desolation*; thus, in utter desolation. Yet there is *in it* a tenth, the sign of totality, *which shall return* when it hath been consumed, after the manner of a teil tree and an oak, whose substance is in them *when they have cast*. This consumption, or desolation, or casting, is the removal of all evil, of all that is outward in the judgment of a holy God—*so the holy seed* shall be the substance thereof. (Is. vi. 13.)

Thus, in the purpose of God there is a casting away of all that is outward, as the tree does its leaves, that new life may come forth, which is the substance within: the two terms *holy seed* distinctly express this. The tenth, then, signifies that this is the truth to all men, even the truth implied by the name Jesus, who as Christ imparts the holiness of Jehovah, and as the Son is in us the seed of the Father.

Then, however Ephraim be confederate with Syria, and so in the flesh, in enmity to God and his people, he shall be broken, and be no more a people; for the kingdom of David shall be established. This is signified in the name of the son of the prophet Shear-jashub—a remnant shall return, which remnant is comforted with this assurance. Let us take care that our minds do not glide away from the spiritual, as it was before Isaiah and Matthew, to the outward and visible. The *outward* remnant is simply identical with the teil or oak tree stripped of its leaves, which

remnant, implying the judgment of God beforehand, signifies the substance or Spirit which should be in every man. When man is redeemed, and so is delivered from all that is of the creature—the flesh, sin, and Satan—the remnant returns to Jehovah, which is *here represented by those remaining after the judgment of God*. And so it is a remnant according to the election of grace. Elijah thought that God had ceased to reveal himself, but he was told that, however in the providence of God his prophets were slain, there was yet a remnant; there were seven thousand who had not bent their knees to Baal; that is, in the signification of these numbers to which they are ever constant, all who obeyed the covenant in the fulness of the blessing of promise. So, then, the seven thousand would be identical with the remnant. God calls all men to salvation, and they who obey the call are called out witnessing to what is for all men in holiness and in love. This is set forth by Shear-jashub. Let us, then, trace Isaiah's use of the component parts of this name, **רש**—the remnant, that is, the redeemed. (Is. x. 21, 22.) The consumption decreed—that is, the desolation consequent upon the judgment of God—*shall overflow with righteousness*. It is the covenant, and is ever the same, that where redemption is, where the vessel is purged, there righteousness is: yea, it will overflow where the judgment has been. They who possess righteousness, whose life is rooted in God, are the remnant (xxxvii. 31). Precious are the promises (xi. 11—16) for them. But for Babylon there is no remnant whatever. (Is. xiv. 22.) The Moabite has but few, and they feeble. (Is. xvi. 14.) While the remnant of Syria will be as that of Ephraim. (Is. xvii. 3.) The remnant *shall return*, **ישׁוּב**. If they did not, they would cease to be a remnant. They are the remnant of Jacob, who earnestly desire the blessing, so they will return unto the mighty God. (Is. x. 21; xix. 22.) Can there be any doubt in the mind of the careful and thoughtful student of the Old Testament what the prophet here signifies by the returning? If there is, we will cite but three more passages. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: *return* unto me; for I have redeemed thee. (Is. xliv. 22.) For thus saith Jehovah Elohim, the Holy One of Israel, In *returning and rest* shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not. (Is. xxx. 15.) And the ransomed of the

Lord *shall return* and come to Zion, with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. All that the name Shear-jashub signifies is implied in the name Jesus.

We must never forget that the purposes of God are ever according to his covenant, according to which he deals with us, and according to which should be *our condition*, and so by faith we make them effective in us; and all will be interpreted according to the name Jesus—Immanuel—Son of David, Son of Abraham. The name Shear-jashub has, as we have shown, respect to that side of the name of Jesus as indicated by the name of the Son of Abraham. But there is yet another name. A sign is now given from God: a Virgin shall have a child and call his name Immanuel, God with us, according to the truth which the term “remnant” is intended to signify; for the remnant shall return to the mighty God, and so it is God with us: for we cannot return as the remnant but in the Spirit of the Son. So we are brought nigh in the name of Jesus. The other name, then, is Maher-shalal-hash-baz, which has respect to the other side of the name of Jesus, indicated by the Son of David; for concerning this child it is said, *before it shall cry my father and my mother* the judgment shall go forth against Damascus, and against Samaria, and so against the confederacies of evil. This must be so; it is the work of Jesus: for until he departs, is accursed and dies, puts away the sin of the world and Satan, and all such confederacies, the Spirit of the Son will not come, by whom alone we cry, Abba, Father. The name Jesus is the New Testament name of Immanuel, which includes all that the names of the two sons of the prophet signify, even as “Jesus” includes all that the appellations Son of David, Son of Abraham, signify. The name of Maher-shalal-hash-baz is, “Hasten the prey, Speed the spoil,” that the filial relation may be revealed, and the name of Father be hallowed and magnified. (Luke xii. 50.) The Son came to reveal the Father that all might know him. (Matt. xi. 27.) Then let every knee be bowed, and let every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord—being one with him in the Spirit—to the glory of God the Father. And so are we the *holy seed* of God. As in the other name, we now turn to Isaiah, and see his use of the component parts of Maher-shalal-hash-baz. It is said, critics differ as to the

grammatical construction of the several parts of this name, but we are not told what its import is. Jesus, as the Son of David, *hastens his work*, for until it is accomplished he is straitened in himself. He comes as the stronger man, in all the mighty power of Jehovah, to cast out the strong man armed, and that *he might spoil him*. He took possession of the prey as he led captivity captive, and made a show of him openly. He sped to the spoil as he redeemed man, and delivered him from his great enemy, and then received gifts for him.

We now trace the prophet's use of the word מַהֵר, to make haste. In mercy shall *the throne* be established: and he shall sit upon it in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, (and so) *hastening* righteousness; which is an indwelling Jehovah, who is righteousness, and with whom we are one in righteousness. (Is. xvi. 5.) Thus he writes, The children shall *make haste*; thy destroyers, who would destroy the filial relation, shall go forth—go out of thee. (Is. xlix. 17.) A testimony to the redeeming arm of Jehovah, to the throne established in the tabernacle of David, even Christ; for Jehovah of hosts is King. The true children of God ever make haste to cast out all the destroyers. And so it is written, The captive exile *hasteneth* that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit (Is. li. 14); and so the prayer of the Christian is, Come, Lord Jesus; come quickly. לַשָּׁמַיִם, a prey, is something to be utterly destroyed and consumed. (Is. x. 2, & lix. 15.) It is the believer's experience who dwells among those who are strangers to judgment, who is a prey to them even as Jesus was to them among whom he dwelt—judgment is turned backward, and righteousness *standeth afar off*. The verb שָׁחַץ is to make great haste (lx. 22), and לַשָּׁמַיִם, prey or spoils (x. 6, & xlii. 22).

Isaiah says, Jehovah said unto me, Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen concerning Maher-shalal-hash-baz,—a name belonging to Immanuel—a name, as we have abundantly shown, as appertaining to the Son of David, the child born. And I took unto me faithful witnesses, and he approached the prophetess. Whatever may have been the nature or mode of his communication, she, as the prophetess, was, in a figurative sense, a virgin. (See Matt. xxv. 1.) She is to have a child, and it would be a sign sufficient for Abaz. This child is,

according to the figurative teaching of prophecy, to have an abundance of the *land of promise* (Is. vii. 15, 22), which would be the overflowings of righteousness, because of a true redemption, according to the name Maher-shalal-hash-baz. And before the child should know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the reality, the deliverance, would have taken place; for "the land thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of her two kings." Here we are taught how, in the covenant, the grace of God is prevenient. We can refuse the evil and choose the good, because redemption has taken place. And in this grace of God there is an order that, before the remnant returns to the mighty God, before any one can call, My Father, he must in himself experience the truth as it is in the Son of David, according to Maher-shalal-hash-baz.

The true King, who, from generation to generation has been in the midst of men, ruling them prudently with all his power, thus manifests himself. His name is Immanuel. His coming is for the destruction of all the confederacies of evil, and to the overthrow of all who refuse the waters of Shiloah. In the fulfilment of this prophecy the assurance is given that the designs of evil shall be frustrated, that nothing shall disturb the universality and everlasting duration of the Messiah's kingdom; for it is ordered and established, *with judgment* and *with righteousness*, henceforth even for ever.

Notwithstanding the national decay, the ostentatious display of religious formalism, the covetous self-seeking, world-pleasing spirit of the children of Jacob, the patience of God continued on unwearied. His faithfulness shone forth in the gift of the child of promise, that all the families of the earth might be blessed. The prophecy tells us that God himself is our sanctuary, but a rock of offence, a stone of stumbling to those who will not have him as their king, as their deliverer, as one who watches over them and loves them. Although judgment after judgment may come, they show these men, not, indeed, that God is denying himself, not that he is casting them off, but that they are the slaves of sin, confederate with evil, refusing the waters of Shiloah; and so, are rejecting him who, despite their enmity, truly loves them.

Jesus, then, is the Son given, the child born—Wonderful, in all the mysteries of the incarnation; Counsellor, revealing the wisdom of God; the Mighty One, overthrowing all that is not of the

Father ; the Father of eternity, giving power to men to become sons of God ; and Prince of peace, establishing peace in the souls of men. Thus is he Jehovah delivering us from all sin, and as Jehovah our Righteousness is he blessing us with all the fulness of God, to which his name Jesus witnesses.

Whatever, then, may have been, or may yet be, predicated of his pure and spotless human nature must be held fast, notwithstanding what may be asserted of his deity. Revelation is one. Whatever may have been imperfectly revealed is not contrary to that which is perfectly set forth : the former is absorbed by the latter, it is merged in the fuller light.

Isaiah connects the advent of Immanuel with a kingdom—the throne of David, which is ever asserting itself until the kingdoms of the earth become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ.

To advance any argument for the unity of God is superfluous. It lies at the foundation of Christianity, and is unquestioned by the enemies of revealed religion. Of the unity of God, the Jews—the children of Sarah, the married wife—were most jealous. But after Christianity had been established, and afterwards split up into parties and almost gone through schisms and heresies, the children of Agar—the desolate one—were raised up, and with the sword asserted the great truth, “Allah,” God is.

In the prophecy already referred to, “Jehovah,” with its pronoun I, is emphatic. This glorious Being is revealing himself as the Elohim—the covenant Ones. Therefore, when Moses asked by what name he was to make him known to the children of Israel, he was told “Jehovah”—the I AM—the ever present One. Thou shalt say, Jehovah, the Elohim of thy fathers, the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac, the Elohim of Jacob, for these patriarchs respectively revealed the Trinity.

It is stoutly asserted that the doctrine of the Trinity is not found in the Old Testament, whereas it is the basis of the whole fabric of its religion ; and that righteous Jews so understood it, and that it was the covenant made with all flesh, Matthew shows in the name Immanuel.

If, then, the being of Jehovah be necessary from all eternity, the Three Persons, or modes of existence, must be the same—which Three Persons are, as the Word of God abundantly testifies, consubstantial, co-eternal, and co-equal.

Thus, then, while Matthew asserts Jesus to be perfect God and perfect man, he also attests his Sonship, not only in the use of the appellation Immanuel, according to Isaiah vii.—ix., but also in the special revelation of the Father in the Son taking flesh in the womb of the Virgin.

If the divine essence, in its unity, be the basis upon which the superstructure of religion is raised, we cannot regard the Lord Jesus Christ as mere man endowed with extraordinary powers, and sustained in spotless purity through the continual exercise of divine energy maintained on him, and as such filled with the Spirit without measure; nor, on the other hand, regard his proper deity as begotten by the operation of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin.

Are we, then, to speak of his Sonship as eternally begotten? Would it not be a verbal contradiction? He is called of all creation, the first-born; of redemption, the first-born from the dead; of glorification, the first-born among many brethren. Whether the term *πρωτοτοκος* is rendered first-born, head or chief, is immaterial. He is the only begotten one of God. He is the Son manifesting the Father, in creation, redemption, and glory. "I will make him first-born or chief, higher than the kings of the earth." Jehovah is a defence, the Holy One of Israel, a king. (Ps. lxxxix. 2, 3, 18, 19, 20.)

The Sonship of Jesus, as the only begotten of the Father, is, in a sense, singular, unexampled, and wonderful. For, being God, being the second Person in the Trinity, *he became the Son* to reveal the Father. It is the covenant. Though the first begotten, he had existence in a past eternity. Yet, being the covenant given to the people, he came forth as a Son revealing the Father, according to the purpose of Jehovah.

There is but one covenant—that of grace. In this Adam and his posterity were created, afterwards redeemed and glorified. Behold, says the Father, my servant whom I uphold, mine elect. Two terms aptly designating him who is the covenant—the former as bearing a heavy servitude, becoming sin for us, so meeting our necessities; the latter as bringing us into a blessed relation to the Father, according to his own will which he purposed in himself.

Son of God, first-born, elect, express the covenant—the great

mystery hid for generations now revealed. In the fulness of the dispensation of times, the purpose of the Father to gather all things in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him, is in fact now fully revealed.

Thus, in the eternal councils of the blessed Trinity, the Sonship was determined, and the Paternity was manifested, calling into existence intelligent beings to stand in that relation.

Christ is the Son, the first-born of all creation; the first-born from the dead; the first-born among many brethren. In him all things were created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible; whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him and for him, and in him all things consist.

He is the true wisdom of God—revealing the paths of judgment and the ways of righteousness. (Prov. viii.) And he says, Jehovah possessed or acquired me in the beginning of his way. In his own proper deity he had a previous existence, and was acquired and possessed in unison of will in the everlasting covenant, before all creation.

As the Son he is ever in the ways of righteousness, as the King he is ever in the midst of the paths of judgment.

24, 25. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: and knew her not till she had brought forth her Son—the first-born: and he called his name Jesus. Surely we are not to suppose that the term “first-born,” which has led us into the deepest truths, is now used to express simply the first-born of the Virgin. It is a term equivalent to Immanuel or Melchizedek, either of which includes or implies all that is conveyed by the names Christ Jesus, or the appellations Son of David, Son of Abraham.

If, then, “the first-born” is a term equivalent to “Son of God”—as used by Luke—whom Mary was the honoured instrument to bring into the world, no argument can be drawn from its use for or against the opinion that Mary had other children besides Jesus. But if during their betrothal God was pleased to bring forth Jesus and make marriage truly honourable—more, has consecrated it to an excellent mystery—is there anything that can possibly militate against the probability of these righteous

persons realising the blessing of God during their union in the birth of other children? No outward sign attesting corresponding spiritual truths can be regarded as dishonourable, and nothing can be more erroneous than to regard the Virgin mother otherwise than of a sinful nature and subject to all that is of the flesh. The child came in the likeness of redeemed humanity, in the blessings of the covenant, for he had to be circumcised, and the mother to be purified. The Lord himself, in his first sign—at the marriage of Cana, said to his mother, “What is there with me and thee?”—in other words, “What is there common to me and to thee?”

The relationships of life, and all things necessary and incidental to the birth of any one child, are not only of God, but they afford the most expressive symbols of high, holy, and glorious truth.

CHAPTER II.

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- 1 NOW when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa, in the days of Herod
2 the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying,
Where is he that is born King of the Jews ? for we have seen his star in
the east, and are come to worship him.
- 3 When Herod the king had heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all
4 Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and
scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should
5 be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judæa : for thus it is
6 written by the prophet, And thou, Bethlehem, *in* the land of Juda. art not
the least among the princes of Juda : for out of thee shall come a Governor,
that shall rule my people Israel.
- 7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them
8 diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem,
and said, Go and search diligently for the young child ; and when ye have
found *him*, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.
- 9 When they had heard the king, they departed ; and, lo, the star, which they
saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the
10 young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding
great joy.
- 11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with
Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him : and when they had
opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts ; gold, and frankin-
12 cense, and myrrh. And being warned of God in a dream that they should
not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.
- 13 And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth
to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his
mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word : for
14 Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took
15 the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt : and
was there until the death of Herod : that it might be fulfilled which was
spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called
my son.
- 16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was
exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in
Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under,

according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.
17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying,
18 In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great
mourning, Rachel weeping *for* her children, and would not be comforted,
because they are not.
19 But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a
20 dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his
mother, and go into the land of Israel : for they are dead which sought the
21 young child's life. And he arose, and took the young child and his mother,
22 and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus did
reign in Judæa in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither :
notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the
23 parts of Galilee : and he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth : that it
might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a
Nazarene.

Two synonyms appear in the first two verses rendered "born"—the former, as that of the historian ; the latter, of the Magi. That generally respects the father ; this, the mother. But does Matthew intend anything by giving a different word to the Magi to that he uses ? We know how instructive is the change of words rendered "poor" in Luke xxi. 1, 2, and doubtless it is so here. Matthew, by the former word, in verse 4, would express simply the birth, as of any child. But in verse 2 it is a bringing forth : like the earth (Heb. vi. 7), having first received bringeth forth. It is in this sense, doubtless, he intends the use of the word,—that he who came forth King of the Jews did not derive his royalty from Mary, nor from Joseph his reputed father ; but, rather, that he was the true King, true not as opposed to false, but as the substance in contrast with the shadow. David was the shadow of the true. And Matthew would intimate, by the Magi using this word, that they knew the prophecies, the Messiah, whom they worshipped, and the kingdom as a spiritual one.

This kingdom has existed from the first. The Elohim said to man, "Have dominion." But he, surrendering it, sin and death dominated. Still, despite sin and death, when the world emerged from the waters of the deluge, a redeemed world, it was "Have dominion." The Son of David is come the Restorer of all things. And the bringing forth of him as the King of the Jews was the

manifestation of the kingdom in its King, who will not lay down all rule, authority, and power, until all his enemies are his footstool, and the last enemy is death.

Who were the Magi? Were they Gentiles? If not: who were they? Truly it is written, "all they from Sheba shall come; they shall bring gold and incense, and shall show forth the praises of the Lord. The labours of Egypt, the merchandize of Ethiopia, and of the Sabæans—men of stature shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine, they shall fall down unto thee. They shall make supplication unto thee, saying, God is in thee, there is none else, there is no God." These passages doubtless refer to the Gentiles, and in their spiritual import they imply what Matthew has already affirmed—the universal tendency of the truth, and the unlimited dominion of that sceptre before which every knee shall bow. But to take them in their literal signification as pointing to the Magi, would be to invest them with a difficulty insuperable, inasmuch as the places mentioned lie south and not east of Bethlehem. Other passages more important, more comprehensive, and more conclusive, have their fulfilment in the Magi. It is quite begging the question to make them philosophers consulting the heavens, and looking for stars, and then doing the extraordinary thing which they did, instead of seeing in the event a simple outcoming of truth. Such a course in nowise serves our Evangelist. He shows here not only that Christ is come to confirm the promise of God to the fathers, that these men acknowledge him from the place of their captivity, and, by their acts, show the fulfilment of a very important prophecy, that the kingdom of David is established and the ruins thereof built up, but also, that the covenant in the Old and New Testament is one, and that, despite the opposition of unrighteousness, the same principles have been working throughout all time.

What necessity was there for a twofold sense of the term Magi—a good and a bad one, here and in the Acts respectively? The Magi may have been known to the Greeks as professors of the magical arts, while those before the time of Zoroaster were the sacerdotal caste of the Medes and Persians. However, Luke, writing about the same time as Matthew, speaks of the Magi in the west—the field of his labours; while Matthew of those in the east—the field, most probably, of his.

The term Magi appears four times in the Greek version of Daniel, where it is evidently contradistinguished from wise men, who are frequently mentioned, and who doubtless were the intellectually great ones. It represented a class, who, whether studying the stars or practising evil magic, possessed some occult power, which may not have been inconsistent with any priestly power, dignity, or honour they might have held in the state. Such was the case with Balaam, whose power the King of Moab worshipped; so with Elymas, whose power influenced the deputy Sergius Paulus as almost to turn him away from listening to Paul; and so with Simon Magus, who used magic arts so successfully that he was taken by the people to be some great one. Simon worshipped power, and when he found the Apostles with a greater power, that by the laying on of hands the Holy Ghost was given, he desired it, and offered to purchase it with money.

The Magi in the west were Jews, which gave them a great opportunity for sustaining that character. They were at that time becoming objects of wonder—the peculiarity of race, the exclusiveness of their belief, made the Jew feel that others stood not on the same footing with himself. Whether objects of scorn and hatred, or of superstition, they, who were possessed of sufficient presence of mind, gave themselves out as the messengers of God, resorting to magic power with no small advantage.

The Alexandrian conquest east and west gave, in the fusion of races and the spread of a powerful and expressive language, comparative freedom to all classes, and so to these men to use their arts independently of the fact that it was part of Alexander's policy to favour the Jews.

The Magi, who came from the east, doubtless were Jews, whose ancestors had for centuries dwelt there—the native soil of mysterious arts, so congenial to the habits and tendencies of the fallen and depraved Israelite. The Magi would, then, be not only Jews, but of the ten tribes, whom Shalmanezar, in the sixth year of the reign of Hosea, carried away captive into Assyria, and placed in the cities of Halab and Habor, and by the river Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

Many continued to reside in these cities, and were accustomed to attend the feasts at Jerusalem, for among those upon whom the Holy Ghost rested on the day of Pentecost were Parthians,

and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia. What, then, could be more expressive of the utter degradation of the children of Israel, than that they, professing to know the true God, should yet worship a power having its source in the creature, and follow the magic art, so contrary to the express words of Scripture? The Jews were forbidden to observe dreams, and to consult those who took upon them to explain them. The law condemned every one to death who pretended to have prophetic dreams, and to foretell what was to come, though it should take place, if it drew them away from the one true God. Hence they were not to consult diviners, magicians, and interpreters of dreams, who would be raised up among them.

There are some weighty reasons why the Magi should be Jews, and of the ten tribes. The tone of the text and context implies it. Let it be granted, and all is natural enough, for Matthew is setting forth the purpose of God, having its fulfilment in the advent of Christ, how that the same principles set forth in the existence of the nation by dim shadows and outlines, were now being clearly and fully manifested. Else, how explain their assurance and knowledge of the Scriptures, which their very singular question plainly indicated, and the fact of all Jerusalem being troubled? They were full of confidence in their knowledge, even as Nathaniel was, who bore his testimony, as certain outward events corresponded with the thoughts, desires, and experience of his inner life.

These men knew the Scriptures; they were familiar with them. Marvellously brought to the place, they involuntarily refer to a passage in the Pentateuch as men familiar with the oracles of God. We have seen his star, they say, referring to the prediction of Balaam, for a star shall rise out of Jacob, and a sceptre out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab. The whole prediction itself witnesses to them as Jews. The star is to rise out of Jacob—Israel's name in captivity in the flesh; and a sceptre out of Israel, Jacob's name when the flesh is put off—is shrunk, and he possesses the blessing—*the land of his inheritance*. They speak of one born King, surely they were not ignorant of other prophecies, and they must have supported their convictions by more than one prophecy before they troubled all Jerusalem and Herod.

We have already noticed the use of two different words ren-

dered "born" in the first two verses of this chapter, as if the historian was preserving the exact word used by the Magi. It is remarkable that these two words are found in the important prophecy beginning at Is. vii. 14, and closing at ix. 7. A virgin shall *bring forth*—a child is *born*. If Matthew intends that we hold our own on the ground he has already made for us, and that we should follow him, then we say these men knew the prophecy and understood it, and so bore their testimony to Immanuel brought forth as the Son of David, whose throne was to be established for ever. Who then, indeed, should give testimony to the true King, but *all Israel*? Thus the ten tribes acknowledge him whose right it is to reign over the house of David; they acknowledge him Lord to the glory of God the Father.

They indeed felt their captivity, not of a temporal, but of a spiritual nature. As Jews they would know how truly they were alienated from the God of Israel, and utterly degraded by the practice of those acts forbidden by the law. They would then look for redemption, as Anna, of the tribe of Asshur, rejoiced to tell of Jesus to all such in Israel, that there was now one King over the hitherto divided families of Jacob.

They would not be ignorant of another remarkable prophecy in Dan. ix. Their brethren, after the captivity, were restored to the land of their fathers, but they were not. They would know the confession and prayer of the prophet in behalf of all the children of Jacob: as he says, "The men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, near and far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them because of their trespass that they had trespassed against God." That is now answered, for the promise of 70 weeks = 490 days, being so many years, and being determined to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy, was fulfilled in the advent of Jesus.

Thus the advent of Messiah was one of expectation and hope. They longed for it with a *suitable condition of soul*, and an extraordinary manifestation was vouchsafed adapted to meet their case. They looked for redemption, the time was at hand. It was their avocation to contemplate the heavenly bodies. And though they were enslaved to them, God makes them subserve his gracious

purpose in respect to the Magi. Many indeed miss the evidences of God's presence, seasons of manifestation, opportunities for blessings, and means of consolation, amid the temptations and trials of life, because they do not look for the promises of God in their present circumstances, in their respective callings and occupations. They do not make their present life attest a higher and holier, but, aliens from all hope, are strangers to noble aspirations.

These men looked for redemption, they looked for the star in Jacob. The sign vouchsafed was most eloquent of eternal verities, to which they testified in their offerings. It would indeed require a large amount of ingenuity to make this the subjective experience of the Gentile heathens, who were strangers to the captivity and restoration of hope among the children of Jacob.

There is yet another and more forcible argument, for in the Magi, as the representatives of the ten tribes, there is the fulfilment of another and important prophecy, on which the primitive church laid much stress (Amos ix. 11, 12), "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and *I will raise up its ruins*, and I will build it as in the days of old," referring to a time not only previous to the dispersion, but even anterior to the division of the kingdom, even the time when God visited the Gentiles to take out a people *for his name*, even Abraham and his seed, who represented the true Father, and the human family as his children. If this were not the case, how could it be said that Jesus possessed the throne of his father David in its integrity?—what evidence would there be, so far as the outward sign goes, that the enemies of the kingdom had not triumphed?

Surely no more conclusive testimony could have been given that he was the Christ, the true Son of the true David, than that given by the Magi. They, possessing the oracles of God and other inestimable privileges, yet having departed from the Holy One of Israel, were the most degraded of the human family, but now they draw nigh to God, honouring their King. Their number doubtless was ten, not only as representing the ten tribes of the house of Israel, and signifying it in its totality, of which this mystic number is the sign, but, evidencing at this

very critical time how that Jehovah had, as he witnessed by the ten plagues of Egypt, overthrown all his enemies.

Never did David more truly testify to a kingdom than when he had fallen, was in utter degradation; not indeed by falling, but being so, his enemies could not keep him in his degradation. Never did Christ more truly prove himself a King than when in the chamber of death he not only burst the bands of death, but abolished it, triumphing over his enemies in it. Thus we honour him, we testify to him, when, like the Magi, we return to God; for, they testified that there was no condition too degrading into which men may have sunk, but that he, who was Christ the Son of David, who has made an end of sin, reconciled iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness, will rescue them from it.

All this is consistent with Matthew, who has, in the preceding chapter, shown how the outcasts are restored to dignity and honour in the kingdom of God. He, himself a publican, most degraded, now raised to the foremost rank in that kingdom, would joyfully commemorate the noble acts of men of other tribes, placing them also in the foremost rank.

It is perfectly consistent that the Magi should ask for the King of the Jews, and not of Israel. The dominion of the Son of David is in nowise limited or restricted, every knee must bow and confess that he is Lord. The term Jew was a common term in Jerusalem, whither all the tribes went; and which all would use, as they sought information, and would not provoke jealousy. More, they would gladly use the term expressive of their condition, as they felt themselves unworthy the honoured name of Israel.

It is worthy of remark that James, the first bishop of Jerusalem, in his epistle addressed the twelve tribes scattered abroad. He addressed them in their theocratic name, for he well knew, as he had before testified in the first council, how that God had fulfilled his promise in building again the tabernacle of David, which was fallen down, and the ruins thereof, and in setting it up.

These tribes came up to Jerusalem out of every nation, so that from the time of the visit of the Magi to the day of Pentecost, a period was afforded, in which the Lord would minister to the

circumcision, and especially to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, whom he would address as they listened, among the multitudes that thronged him, to the words of grace that proceeded out of his lips.

It will not be out of place to say a few words respecting the star. If God at any time vouchsafes a sign, it is that best adapted to the circumstances, and most convincing to the judgment of those for whom it is intended.

It is, on the one hand, dogmatically asserted that there was no miraculous agency, but a conjunction of two planets of intense brightness. If so, then we ask, What connexion would it have with the prophecy or its fulfilment? How would it convince or influence these men concerning a birth that had taken place in some remote part of the world? And, if it were such a conjunction, how can it be explained that the same luminous effect took place after their interview with Herod? On the other hand, it is as confidently assumed that it was the creation of a new star for the occasion. This would be contrary to all the miracles or signs of the New Testament, where there is no new creation, but the suspension of the ordinary law, while a higher comes into operation. That the Lord is come the Restorer of all things, is evidenced by coincidences in every-day life; and it would be more consistent with the truth to regard the star, if not one of the remote orbs of space visibly brought forth into fuller manifestation, then, as the morning star in the intensity of unusual splendour.

What is the language of the Psalmist in his affliction? What, the cry of the troubled spirit in the darkness of sin, but, How long, O Lord? wilt thou hide thyself for ever? shall thy wrath burn like fire? Why hidest thou thy face? Thus, in their captivity, and desiring the long looked for redemption, like their fathers of old, may they not have breathed forth these supplications with earnest expectation and hope, saying, "Give ear O Shepherd of Israel, Thou that leddest Joseph like a flock: Thou that dwellest among the cherubim, shine forth." Such may have been the prayer of these Magi to whom was vouchsafed such distinguished honour. For nothing would have been more contrary to the revealed ways of God than a new creation to symbolize him who is the root and the offspring of David—the bright and morning Star.

The star was to arise out of Jacob,—the people in captivity after the manner of Egypt (Is. x. 26, 27), and a sceptre should come forth out of Israel, even of the stem of Jesse (Is. xi. 1), and it shall smite the corners of Moab. This enemy lined the whole of Jordan on the east from the Red Sea to Galilee, and he would interpose between Jacob in captivity and his coming up into the land of his inheritance. The corners of Moab would then be the whole of it; and so, the smiting of them would be the overthrowing of all of their enemies. The Magi, then, gave expression to the faithfulness of God in his covenant with man. (Ezek. xxxvi. 23—35.)

“Arise and shine,” for thy light is come. (Is. ix. 1.) If the captivity of Jacob was to be after the manner of Egypt, what can more fully express it than darkness covering the earth, and gross darkness *the people*? yet, the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. The Jews followed the star over the land of their enemies, and crossed the Jordan, as they did of old when the redeeming arm of Jehovah brought them up by the pillar of fire, and his glory was seen upon them. And it is to *their* rising and shining that the Gentiles shall come. Thus, the purpose of him who would rebuild Jerusalem and gather the outcasts of Israel, which he did when he entered it sitting upon an ass, was, that Jerusalem should be the praise of the whole earth, and that from it, as from a centre, should the light of the gospel of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ radiate to the utmost end of the world. To all this Peter sets his seal. He was the minister to the circumcision. To them he addresses his two epistles. From Assyria, the land of the captivity, he addressed them as elect with those at Babylon. He addressed them as the dispersed in the west (the same word in John vii. 35: Jas. i. 1). He therefore contemplates the twelve tribes in their integrity. He tells them to give heed to the oracles of God as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arises in their hearts—that is, possess the reality in the kingdom of Christ and the Spirit of Immanuel.

The place where the Magi saw the infant King was Bethlehem, in the house of Mary. The whole scene is laid by Matthew at Bethlehem, and not Nazareth. Moreover, Joseph, as a righteous man, would not be ignorant of the Scriptures, which had such

special reference to his family and circumstances. He would be well acquainted with Isaiah ix. 6 & 7, with Micah v. 1 & 2, and, therefore, would hardly leave Bethlehem, except under the most urgent necessity. His humble condition and dependence on manual labour enabled him to adapt himself to any place or circumstances. Therefore, he would have no necessity to return to Nazareth, for if he could find support in Egypt he could also in the ancient city of his fathers.

The time when the Magi presented themselves was subsequent to the presentation of the child in the temple, and Mary's purification. The cruel edict of Herod was consistent with his fierce and ungovernable disposition.

3. Herod the king heard these things, and was troubled. He summoned those in whom he had confidence, and demanded of them where Christ, that is King, should be born. To the Scriptures reference was made. And what a testimony is now borne to the Christ the Son of God. The scribes, referring to Micah v. 2, tell him in Bethlehem, that he shall come forth a ruler in Israel, and that his goings forth are from the days of eternity. Truths coinciding with the prophecy, Is. ix. 6, 7. Thus these men, together with the Magi, representing the twelve tribes of Israel, bore their testimony to the faithfulness of God in the advent of him whose kingdom was established with judgment and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever.

We must not suppose that the trouble of Herod and the Jews was in the one case a fear of his power being put down, and in the other, of war. No; it is far deeper with Herod. He feels that the end of his kingdom of unrighteousness is drawing nigh. He learns that the long expected, the truly anointed One is come. All Jerusalem is troubled with him, even as all men are when they are called to their account, and they feel that with all their privileges the true life has not been the warp and woof of their existence.

7. Herod craftily ascertains all he can, and then dismisses the Magi, commanding them to find the young child, return and inform him, that he may worship it—words that plainly indicate that he had no misapprehension who it was. No mere descendant of David would command this from Herod. He had been informed of the deity of him who would reign on David's throne.

The appearance of the Magi, the singularity of the circumstances, and the testimony of the Scriptures, must have been overwhelming, to have thus influenced Herod and the Jews. And withal the conduct of Herod is truly natural. How so? What is the place he holds in the narrative? He is the Pharaoh of the New Testament. He represents a kingdom in antagonism to the kingdom of Messiah, even evil in all its diabolical working, concentrating itself against the purpose of Jehovah. He is the incarnation of the evil one, and exhibits the principles of his kingdom, in pride, lying, deceit, rage, and cruelty.

The Magi leave his presence, but not without some misgivings. Hitherto they had been guided by a heavenly light. Their God had shone forth and led them in their dreary march to the land of hope. Shall they, then, obey the will of Herod? God does not leave them; he gives them, as of old, light, while darkness is the portion of their enemies.

Then let no man say, "I cannot find the Lord," for where the desire is, there is in the very desire a guarantee for the presence of the Spirit to lead. There may be seasons of darkness as of light, of temptation as of triumph. So were there with the Magi, but when they beheld the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

11. They enter the house; they behold the young child. What mingled feelings of joy and adoration, of wonder and amazement must have possessed them! They had seen his star in the heaven above, they now gaze on him, who is the root and offspring of David, the light of the world, despite his humble and lowly state and condition. They might ask, Is this the child concerning whom Herod and all Jerusalem is troubled? Difficulties might here suggest themselves to them, but greater is that joy that surmounts them. In the fulness of it they prostrate and offer no cold homage, but true worship, worthy of him who was the ever blessed One. They worship him and not the mother. If they worshipped a creature they would have worshipped her. And when they had opened their treasures, they offered unto him gifts—gold, frankincense, and myrrh. How full of significance are these words, "They opened their treasures" and presented gifts. It is not the only place where Matthew uses this word "treasure." No writer uses it so frequently as he; he

uses it more than all the others put together. It signifies a depository of riches, be they what they may: Out of the good treasure of the heart. A scribe instructed, built up into the kingdom of the heavens, bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old. Out of their treasure these Magi present their gifts. Now when God makes a gift it is worthy of him. He is ever giving. He gave his Son for man. He gave his Spirit. He gave Himself. He is ever giving—it is his blessedness. Man partakes of the divine nature. All created things abound with testimony how that every perfect gift, and the mode or act of giving, is from above, and cometh from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning. The gifts of these Magi are most suitable. They are consistent with, correspond to, the great realities which the Gospel of the kingdom reveals to us. If not, they would not have been mentioned here. They are expressive of what the Magi themselves possessed; they were, therefore, the outcoming of true worship. God has no need of gifts. He asks only for that which he has first bestowed. If he opens the windows of heaven and pours out his blessing, he expects it in fruit. These men possessed Christ the Son of God; they had touched the golden sceptre, and now bow before him, while their enemies lick the dust. They illustrate the truths contained in the genealogy that they were united to the true King, who had redeemed them from deceit and violence. They present their gifts. And so we, by the mercies of God, should present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable unto God. The gold is pure gold. In its purity it is a witness to the King; and, as gold, the Divine nature free from all the dross of the carnal mind. Such was their condition as believers in the Christ. They had partaken of the substance of things hoped for—redemption and their God. Then they, as Israelites, gave the most conclusive testimony to his faithfulness. They waited for redemption, they sought and found it, and their offering was the outcoming of the truth within. The frankincense is the going forth of the Divine nature according to its law—where love works there is a sweet odour before God. And the myrrh attests the perpetuity of the blessing to the everlasting praise of Him who is in the heart of his people for ever. In Christ they possessed all things. God shined into their hearts, and they, obeying the light, have a

knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, of which the offering was the outward expression, proving incontestably how that God had built up the tabernacle of David, that *the residue of men might seek* after him, and all the Gentiles upon whom his name is called.

13. We may here remark that since the Gospel is one, each writer conveys it by such material as the earthly life of the Lord Jesus affords, and independently of the others. The Magi being warned of God depart into their own country another way. Then was Joseph commanded to take the young child and his mother and flee into Egypt, and to remain there until the word of the Lord should again come unto him. Egypt is now to be the asylum for the Holy family. Could they not remain in their own country, and the Lord baffle the cruel purposes of Herod as he did those of Ahab when he sought Elijah? Then why do they go down into Egypt? Would not Egypt be, in the mind of a pious Jew, the last place in which he would seek an asylum? Had not the Lord ever denounced the abomination of Egypt, executed judgment upon it, and forbidden his people going down there? Then in the face of all this, why are they sent there? Jacob, even when his family wanted sustenance, and there was bread in Egypt, and his beloved Joseph was there, whom he longed to see, refused to leave the land of God, to depart from the presence of his God, and go down there unless He went with him. Even so, would Joseph have remained where he was had he not been divinely warned to the contrary. Egypt has a spiritual meaning—it represents the world, and all that is of it. Whatever may have been the doubts in the mind of Joseph, yet, as a righteous man, he would assuredly understand how that God *was revealing himself* as a Father, and that, as of old, it might be said, God sent him with the child “to preserve for himself a posterity in the earth, and to save the lives of men by a great deliverance.” The Jews sojourned there, and were oppressed. The cruel Pharaoh by every means sought to diminish them. They were oppressed, and the bondage of death, in its presence and its power, was more prominently exhibited. Thus, they learned their condition. They learned through the hard experience of a visible state of things the stern realities of the invisible—the galling yoke of sin.

Herod, like Pharaoh, represents the prince of this world, and Egypt the kingdom of darkness—the world, in its antagonism to the kingdom of light. The Holy Family go down into Egypt, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my Son. (Hosea xi. 1.) Christ's going down into Egypt and sojourning there, represented the whole human family far off from God, in a land of death; which had its further fulfilment when he came under the burden of sin and suffered its oppression in its concentrated and most malignant form on the cross of Calvary. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thine help. I will be thy King: where is there any other that may save thee in all thy cities? (Hosea xiii. 9) I will ransom thee from the power of the grave; I will redeem thee from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction. Change of purpose shall be hid from mine eyes.' In me the fatherless findeth mercy." Whatever, then, narrows the Paternity of God is not of him. Therefore, regarding all men in the bondage of sin and death—in a word, in Egypt—he says, Out of Egypt have I called my Son. To the Father, in deliverance and blessing, the Jewish people were called out.

16. Herod is mocked by the Magi. In guilelessness they promised to return and supply the desired information, but they did not. No one under any circumstances is bound to fulfil a promise made contrary to the mind and will of God. The principles of the covenant are of paramount obligation. No moral obligation can exist contrary to these. Though they had promised they were not bound by it. Light is revealed; the will of God is theirs, and they must obey. However, Herod is exceeding wroth and sends forth and slays all the children that are in Bethlehem, in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the Magi. Many a one ignorant of the covenant would and does ask, Why was Herod permitted to do this great wickedness? And how unsatisfactory are the reasons assigned!

It is not true to say, The event took place in order that the prediction might be fulfilled. All events are the manifestation or development of certain principles, the predictions of which had their existence from such events *foreshadowed*, and are not the cause or origin of them. Nor was the massacre of the inno-

cents permitted to prove that Jesus was the child of prophecy that it might have a lasting impression on the minds of a generation, and so be an unanswerable argument against them respecting him when he came forth to be received by Israel.

Again, to say that it was permitted in order to stay any further enquiry or search by Herod or his successor, that the Lord Jesus might live in privacy and obscurity, is only another instance of the unsatisfactory guesses at truth where the mind of the writer is not followed. Nor was it that Herod might fill up the measure of his guilt, and retributive justice be vindicated, because in this world wickedness is not to go unpunished. Whereas it does, for the wicked flourish as a green bay tree. Nor are we to soften down the reality by saying, the sword was more considerate than fever, for the unnaturalness of the massacre shocks and horrifies us. However, there was a great end served in the destruction of the innocents. They were witnesses—martyrs for the truth. We cannot fail seeing, in this shocking event, the naked and dire hostility of the enemy of all righteousness against the Most High. It exhibits the unrelenting malignity of sin against *the Paternity* of God. Matthew is again bringing up the covenant—the revelation of a Triune God. It is against the Father that all evil concentrates itself. In the former chapter the Paternity is set forth by a virgin bringing forth a Son, and calling his name Immanuel. In this, the hostility to it is exhibited in slaying all the children in the city of David. Herod, in his endeavour to diminish the Israelites, is a true type of him who has the power of death, and holds all men in bondage.

Pharaoh, the impersonation of Satan, formed his plans and adopted the most cruel devices in order to destroy the children of Israel. He sought to diminish them by unjust labour, by oppressive burdens, and increased them till their cry came up into the ears of the God of their fathers. So, the cruel Herod being thwarted, destroyed the innocent witnesses to the Father of all. In this enmity to the Father, and which is the condition of the carnal mind, there is an unchanging hostility to all that is of him. And there is no one, however holy and innocent, free from the assaults of Satan, or of that soul-destroying enmity which is the law of the depraved nature of us all.

17. Then was fulfilled, "In Rama was there a voice heard,

lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." Whatever may have been the event in the early history of the family of Jacob, or the circumstances of the remnant of the Israelites as they were gathered in the land of Egypt, just before their deportation into captivity, we may see a greater fitness in Rachel weeping than in Rebecca or Sarah doing so. In Rachel, the covenant is more fully revealed than in Sarah or Rebecca. The three patriarchs were representatives of the Three Covenant Ones, who in their covenant names are thus described, the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac, the Elohim of Jacob. And since the idea of union in the wife of Jacob conveys the idea of the covenant, we have in her the covenant of God. In her it expresses itself in all its tender and affectionate love and solicitude. It refuses to be comforted because *its children* are not. What a lovely portraiture does this unfold to us of the Paternity of God !

19. When Herod was dead, when the destroyer had departed, and not before, did the angel of the Lord appear unto Joseph and command him to arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel, because they are dead which sought the young child's life. Every enemy is overcome. Therefore must Christ rise from the dead and reign till all enemies are put under his feet. He went down into Egypt. He identified himself with all men. He experienced the power of the destroyer. He entered into death ; but he overcame him, and destroyed him. He then came forth the resurrection of all men.

The whole world is the Lord's. There is no middle wall of partition. God is the Father, therefore the whole human family is holy. His Word, then, calls every man to arise out of bondage, and go into the land of Israel. This is redemption. The Magi did accordingly. They testified to him who is Christ, born King of the Jews. Our condemnation is not because this is not so, but because we believe not into the name of the only begotten One of the Father : for there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.

Jesus, then, went down into Egypt, that he might be one with us—a true brother, born for adversity. He was made sin for us, who knew no sin. He came under the dominion of death, that

through death he might destroy the devil. Therefore while he is in Egypt, Herod dies. So, through the cross he put away sin—the sin of the world; and his resurrection attested the freedom of all men. Was it, then, a mere quotation of Scripture to be told that it was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, Out of Egypt have I called my Son?

Who is this Son? Is it, applied to those whom Pharaoh oppressed? or, those whom the Assyrian took captive? or, those whom the Idumæan slew? or, all whom Satan has destroyed?

Israel, on whom the name of the Lord is called, must be a witness to him who is the true Abraham—the Father of a multitude—the Father of the spirits of all flesh, for in Jesus the necessities of all men are met to the uttermost. Thus saith the Lord, “They shall come with weeping and with mercies, and with favour will I lead them. I will cause them to walk by the rivers of water in a straight way wherein they shall not stumble, for I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born. Hear the word of the Lord O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattereth will gather him as a shepherd his flock; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from him that was stronger than he.” Here, then, at the commencement of the Gospel, does Matthew set before us the redemption of all men.

We have, hitherto, in the form of simple narrative, an epitome of the gospel or covenant reaching back into a past eternity, and carrying us forward into a glorious accomplishment. The Three Persons of the Trinity have again just been brought before us; and in the name of Jesus—Immanuel—the first-born, the elect, we have the covenant effected—the eternal purpose of the Father ratified and sealed in the Incarnation.

“I, Jehovah, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee for a covenant of the people.” This is the purpose of the covenant to all men. It is carried out in Christ, for the throne of David is established with righteousness and judgment for ever. It will be then, only, by a practical knowledge of the kingdom that we shall be prepared, when the word comes calling us most truly to go up out of Egypt into the land of Israel, to lay aside the body of this death and meet our God.

The Lord Jesus now comes before us that, as our Exemplar, we may follow the steps of his most holy life. Not, indeed, by confounding abstract truth with practical religion. Abstract religion, like false religion, is a misnomer. There is but one religion, in its proper sense. It is a binding or union with God. By whatever mental power, logical sequence, or stirring eloquence we may be charmed so as to give a ready acquiescence, no mere doctrine will save a man. Can we say the doctrine of Christ—that which the name implies—a condition, a burial into his death, is enforced in order to be a disciple of his? Before we can take one step in the path of righteousness, we must know him as the Son of David. We must know him as our King before we can cry Abba, Father. “We must bear about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus, *in order that* the life of Jesus may be made manifest in us.” In the simple narratives of the gospel—in the earthly life of the Redeemer, we are taught these truths. Hence Matthew tells us that Joseph, when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judæa in the room of his father Herod, was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee, and came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, “He shall be called a Nazarene.” It is said in respect of this that it is a difficulty that awaits solution. What is a difficulty? Although men frequently acknowledge their inability to expound the Scriptures, the mystery is revealed, and divine writers solve these imaginary difficulties. If they would only make the stand-point of those who were pens of a ready writer, they would possess the same power to perceive as they had to write. But what is the fact? Ignorance propagates itself, and no higher ground is taken than the hackneyed expressions of men. These, indeed, have in the main constituted the forms in which successive generations have shaped their views of truth.

The words Nazarite and Nazarene are cognate, being derived from the same root—Nazar, separate, crowned, sanctified. The former is one whose life corresponds with the name; the latter, simply one who dwelt at Nazareth.

What was there in Nazareth, or Christ’s dwelling there, that should so particularly identify him with either of these appella-

tions? And in what way are the prophets fulfilled in his name of Nazarene?

Nazareth is situate among the mountains of Galilee—a beautiful table-land, crowned with all that is verdant and luxuriant; separated, in that it is surrounded and hemmed in by barren ridges of mountains—a green and fruitful soil within, and barrenness without. Thus was it separated, crowned, and blessed.

Nazareth, like many other places in England and elsewhere, where Nature has done so much, was steeped in moral darkness, so that, Nazareth, notwithstanding its natural beauty and luxuriant fertility, became a proverb, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” It is, alas, too true, that where Nature in all her freshness and fulness is ever testifying to the presence of God, man ignores that presence in the indulgence of the flesh. In this moral wilderness Christ dwelt, and in it he was one separated, crowned, blessed.

Thus, what Nazareth did, as separated from the surrounding barrenness, crowned with fertility and blessed of God, physically represent, this Christ did, morally. Considering, then, the physical and moral condition of Nazareth while the Lord Jesus resided there, no one was more entitled to the appellation “Nazarene” than he. Wherever he went he was a Nazarene. It was his glory. He was despised and persecuted, not because he was a Nazarene, but because of the principles that name expressed, and which, spoken by the prophets, were in it fulfilled. According to it he is our Exemplar, our pattern man.

The prophets everywhere testify to the truths implied in this name, and which were fulfilled in Christ. The existence of the Jewish nation was a witness to Jehovah Elohim—to the covenant. Hence the Jews were to testify to that name that all the nations of the earth might be blessed. And they were to fulfil the vow of the Nazarite, not in its outward form, but in life and truth; which they would do only so far as they possessed that which the prophets themselves had, the Spirit of Christ, and so witnessed beforehand to the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.

The vow of the Nazarite was in truth Christ's. Therefore the life of the Nazarite was not only for the ancient people of God, but for all men who would follow his steps.

Matthew, in setting forth the covenant, *anticipates* the whole work of Christ. This is the ground on which he as a Christian Jew, or as a true Jew, must place us. The covenant places us there. The work of Christ is *proleptically* regarded. So then, his whole earthly walk, and especially his showing forth to Israel, was the result of his resurrection and ascension. He could not have been our Exemplar after his resurrection in his resurrection body, therefore is his work anticipated, and so he is the Nazarite or Nazarene of the Gospel.

In his use of his covenant name, "Son of Man," the Lord signified all that the Son of David and Son of Abraham expressed. Herein he must be a Nazarite or Nazarene. If, then, we are to follow his steps, we must be sons of David and sons of Abraham—kings and priests unto God; which we shall be only as we are Nazarenes or Nazarites—separated, crowned, sanctified.

The first idea suggested by Nazar is "separation." It was said of Joseph, he was separate from his brethren. But, without referring more particularly to the law of the Nazarite, where the word is repeatedly used (Numb. vi.), we read—Thus shall ye separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness; that they die not in their uncleanness, when they defile my tabernacle that is among them. (Lev. xv. 31.)

The next idea is "to crown or consecrate," and in respect to this meaning the exhortations and denunciations were very pointed. The crown was the golden plate on the forehead of the high priest's mitre, with the inscription "HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD," a token of his eminent distinction and separation unto God. How fitting, then, was this name for him who was emphatically the Holy One, separate from his brethren, King over all.

All prophecy was the testimony of Jesus. Hence the prophets continually enforced those principles of which he was the fulfilment. It is written, I will make the horn of David to bud. I have ordained a lamp for my anointed. His enemies will I clothe with shame, but upon himself shall his *crown* flourish. In another Psalm, after setting forth the covenant and its scope—that Jehovah is our defence, the Holy One of Israel our King, that he has made his first-born higher than the kings of the earth, it speaks of the humiliation of him who was the Son of

the true David, who cries: Thou hast cast off and abhorred; thou hast been wroth with thine anointed; thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant; thou hast profaned his *crown* to the ground. This humiliation he passes through before he is made higher than the kings of the earth; before his enemies are brought to shame, and *his crown flourishes, or the horn of David buds*.

These ideas are also suggested by the "Branch" (Netser, Is. xi. 1), which in the opinion of some supplies the root for "Nazarene." The expressive sentence is, "A branch shall grow out of his roots." The roots are buried. Like the corn of wheat falling into the ground and dying, they are buried into death. So are we by faith buried into the death of Christ. It is from these roots that the Branch is to spring. That which is of man is to die, that the life of God may be revealed. In this imagery we have what the term Nazarene suggests—a separation through death and burial, a consecration in not being alone, but possessing the blessing of him who constitutes us trees of righteousness, full of sap, bringing forth abundant fruit.

The Nazarite vow was an institution arising out of the nature of things—God was manifesting himself. Therefore, if he had not the reality, he would have the outward sign, lest he smite the earth with a curse. He who takes upon himself the vow does it voluntarily, and becomes the Nazarite—the outward representation of holiness in the law of his separation and dedication to God.

Respecting the details, we may remark, that the vine is one of God's best earthly gifts to man. And, with reference to the law of the Nazarite, it would be very comprehensive in its signification. The command is to abstain from eating anything of the vine, from the kernel to the husk, all the days of the separation. It is intended to convey all that fasting signifies, which would be obviously impracticable. Hence it signified not the mere abstaining from everything that disposes to carnal pleasure, indulgence, or excitement, or would carnally blunt the power of the divine life, but the putting off the flesh altogether.

He is to leave his hair unshorn. It is here the symbol of holiness. The consecration of his God is upon his head, and *from it* he must *not* be separated. This was the most important

symbol of the Nazarite institution—one always present and showing itself, reminding the possessor of his consecration. So expressive was it that, when the Jews had forsaken their God, Jchovah spake unto Jeremiah (vii. 29), “Cut off thy nazar—hair, not shorn—and cast it away, and take up a lamentation on high places: for the Lord hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath. For the children of Judah have done evil in my sight.”

It was the duty, no less than the privilege of the whole Jewish people, to be truly all that the vow of the Nazarite represented, *separated from the flesh and resting in God*.

This institution of the Nazarite is indirectly referred to in the Epistle to the Corinthians. Paul is far from being satisfied with their spiritual condition. He is sorely grieved at their carnality, which is the source of their divisions. The truth knows nothing of carnal strifes, of divided churches, parties, or sects. If Christians, they were one in Christ—their partaking of the communion of one body, their fellowship in prayer, their coming together in the common assembly expressed it. The Apostle urged them to be followers of him as he was of Christ. Hereby he showed he had no sympathy with their doings. He knew only Jesus Christ and him crucified; and the ordinances which he delivered unto them, how they should appear in the house of God, covered or uncovered, or, in the wearing of their hair long or short taught this.

The head of Christ is God—that is, he is one with him in the divine nature. The head of man is Christ—he is one with him in all that pertains to Christ. And so the head of the woman is the man. Yet this union of man and woman is the subjection of one to the other, according to creation's law, which the long and short hair, as also the covered and uncovered head taught. And this subjection teaches how that in universal man, the fleshly nature must be subject to the divine. Paul argues, the man is the image and glory of God, the woman the glory of the man—the man is not of the woman but the woman of the man; neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man. Thus the divine life is not of the flesh, but the flesh is of deity. The divine life was not for the flesh, but the flesh for the divine life. Although creation's law has been turned upside down,

redemption has come in, and the proper relation of man and woman is the symbol of the covenant of God. Not merely that man and woman are one flesh, or that God and man are one Spirit in the Lord, but that, in that union, the human nature is subservient to the divine. Therefore, the man is not without the woman, nor the woman without the man in the Lord. Wherefore they are to be respectively covered and uncovered in the house of God, as they are taught by nature in the wearing of short and long hair. The spiritual life, in the house, that is, the Church or the presence of the living God, is not covered. Holiness must stand forth uncovered, or else it dishonours its head. And the flesh which first inverted creation's law, and played false in its allegiance, must be covered. Uncovered it is shame, and it dishonours its head. So in respect of wearing the hair the same principles are set forth. For this cause ought the woman to have power over her head. Her long hair is given to her for a covering. It is her glory. That which covers is a power to bring into subjection. Sarah was reprov'd by Abimelech when she was told that her "brother" and not her husband was a covering to her. The cross of Christ is the power of God. By it only can we put away and hide the shame of the flesh. And so the woman in her fidelity expresses the truth as it is in Christ, *separated* from sin and *consecrated* to God.

She was to have power because of the angels. They represent holiness in its unchanging hostility to all that is adverse to it. They honour their head, excelling in strength doing his will.

If all things in heaven and in earth are reconciled, it is not by reducing the former to a level with the latter, but by bringing things on earth into oneness with things in heaven. Thus, God teaches us even by the most cherished relationships of life, that the flesh must be made subject to righteousness, a truth found in all the paths of nature, which is ever eloquent of the invisible things of God.

There was a third and important feature of the Nazarite vow. He was not to become unclean under any consideration, for he was separate from all that is of the earth, earthy, and consecrated in a holy relationship to God. Contact with a dead body is specially prohibited, however inadvertently such a thing might happen. It was defilement, and so indicated a condition the very

opposite of contact or oneness with God. The Nazarite is separate from the flesh. "Come out and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and ye shall be my sons and daughters saith the Lord God Almighty."

By such contact we are defiled, and holiness departs. The head must be shorn ; thereby teaching most truly that all that went before comes to nought, and that there is no such thing as indefectibility, or that any one is endued with a stock of holiness.

The Nazarites were eminently useful in the land ; by their calling they would keep alive in men's consciences the holy character of God, and a deep sense of their privilege in being separated unto Him.

All this had its fulfilment in him, who was called the Nazarene, who not only revealed the Father but showed what was his calling, that all men might do his will and keep his commandments.

CHAPTER III.

- 1 IN those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judæa,
2 and saying, Repent ye : for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is
3 he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying
in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.
4 And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle
about his loins ; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.
- 5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round
6 about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.
- 7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his
baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you
8 to flee from the wrath to come ? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for
9 repentance : and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to
our father : for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up
10 children unto Abraham. And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the
trees : therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down,
11 and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance,
but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not
worthy to bear ; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire :
12 whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and
gather his wheat into the garner ; but he will burn up the chaff with
unquenchable fire.
- 13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of
14 him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and
15 comest thou to me ? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer *it to be so*
now : for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered
16 him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the
water : and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of
17 God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him : and lo, a voice from
heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

THE Evangelist has, in the early history of Jesus, given a brief repetition of the Jewish history in the oppressor and the cry of the oppressed—the judgment and a consequent deliver-

ance; and an indispensable obligation to walk in holiness and love before God.

In the preceding chapters there is not only an epitome of the past, and an intimation of what would take place, but a fuller revelation of those principles which are ever manifesting their power in the providence of God. Matthew sets before us our Melchizedek in separating us from bondage, and imparting to us a holy life consecrated to God.

In Christ Jesus the awful reality of sin is revealed in separating us from the Father; and the inflexible holiness of God putting away the sin of the world, that life and immortality may be the common lot of all men. In him Satan and every enemy are overthrown, every yoke is broken, the enmity slain, the body of sin destroyed. So that in Christ the deliverance is effected, and as a Nazarene he witnessed to the reality of his cross, his resurrection, and the blessings of his Spirit. He witnessed to a King and the Father of a multitude, in whom all the families of the earth were blessed.

The work of Christ, then, is anticipated, and we are here called not only to contemplate him as the Nazarene, but to possess him in a separation from sin and a consecration to God, in order to follow the steps of his most holy life.

What, then, is the truth which in this chapter is so prominently brought before us as preparing the way of the Lord and making his paths straight?

Men here raise many difficulties, but the truth simply and clearly apprehended meets them all. "In those days came John the Baptist." These words literally taken would signify the time when the Holy Family dwelt at Nazareth, but spiritually when Christ was a Nazarene, separated, crowned, sanctified.

We have contemplated the physical aspect and moral condition of Nazareth, and how truly Jesus, while dwelling there, was the Nazarene. In that moral waste he was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. But in what connexion stands the Baptist to these words? He and the Lord Jesus together—as if they were one man—bring out the two *distinctive* features of the Nazarene. As the Nazarene, Jesus is our Exemplar, but the Baptist is his forerunner, and, as such, must—even in a visible revelation of the truth—witness to Christ crucified, even as

every Christian must. Taking the Lord, then, as our Exemplar, he is one with us. He came in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin that he might put it away, and we in him, that the life of God might be our everlasting inheritance. The Baptist, then, does for him what he cannot do for himself; while he himself witnesses to the correlative truth, the gift of the Holy Spirit, going about doing good.

The Baptist was ordained to be a Nazarite from his birth. It was said by the angel, "He shall drink neither wine nor strong drink." Yet he was a Nazarite in its highest and truest sense. His separation was not merely in that stern discipline, when, as an ascetic, he lived secluded from the world renouncing its pleasures and indulgences, living in retirement and solitude; but as the forerunner of Jesus, constituting, so to speak, one element in the condition of the Nazarene.

The Lord Jesus, according to his work anticipated, was in a far higher sense a Nazarene than as a mere inhabitant of Nazareth, as he now is in a yet still higher sense exalted at the Father's right hand.

"In those days" is the formula for indicating the connexion in which the Baptist stands to these truths. Hence the importance of introducing him here in his very distinctive teaching, life, baptism, and relation to the Lord Jesus. In the words of Mark, he is the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

The Baptist is in the wilderness proclaiming the kingdom of the heavens at hand—a present reality, not one that shall be, but is, that men might enter, realise, and enjoy it. There was the bringing of the Son up out of Egypt, and here the Baptist is in the wilderness. The whole world *is redeemed*. It is in the wilderness, and men are not to look back, and lust for that out of which they are redeemed, but forward. They who have seen and entered the kingdom have a goodly heritage, for they have done what the Baptist in his doctrine, life, baptism, and relation to Jesus enforced in order to realise Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. We now enter through the death of Christ—he is the door; and there is yet a fuller accomplishment when we shall possess a fulness of blessing at the Father's right hand for evermore.

It is in the wilderness—that is, to a redeemed world, insensible of its privileges and its blessings—that the Baptist preaches—calling all men to repentance.

Matthew does not call things by wrong names. He uses the term “wilderness” carefully and advisedly. He does not confound the world redeemed with the Church, or the Church with the world. There was no change of heart with those who cried, “Would to God that we had died in this wilderness!” (Numb. xiv. 2.) How many cry in this spirit when the gracious dealings of Jehovah are to them inexplicable? The wilderness condition of all men is a guarantee of the land of promise, which must be entered by Jordan. The death of Christ must be a practical reality within us, and this to the end. Men perish in the wilderness as of old. The wilderness witnessed to the redeeming power and love of God, and men perishing to their unbelief.

In the wilderness the Baptist preached, “Repent ye: for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand.” This was the ground upon which he urged repentance.

The kingdom of the heavens is a formula peculiar to Matthew. It signifies that the Triune God is near. The heavens are spoken of in the Old Testament, and to the mind of the Jew there were three. “Give ear, O heavens,” are the words of Moses and Isaiah, as referring to the glorious Beings there. The Psalmist writes, “Jehovah reigneth; the world also shall be established, that it shall not be moved. He shall judge the people righteously. Let the heavens rejoice.” And Daniel, warning the king, tells him “That his kingdom will not be established until he knows that the heavens do rule, that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men.” Here the heavens and the Most High are identical. And since they generally recognised three heavens, the formula of Matthew intimates that the Three Persons of the Trinity in their covenant relation to man are near, which covenant is fulfilled in Christ. So the grace of God, in all its fulness, is in advance of every man, and urges him, by all means, to repent and obey. Because of this kingdom of the heavens, Christ must suffer, and rise again as the prophets witness. So Paul taught when he preached Christ at Antioch. He did not turn to a few predictions, but doubtless took what was set before him in the lessons

read, which, from the words found in his exhortation, appear to have been Deut. i. and Isa. i. He taught how God exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt. As King he revealed himself in the ten plagues destroying all his enemies. And as a Father he destroyed the seven nations in the land of Canaan. He put out of it, *according to his covenant*, all who dishonour his paternity and divided it to those who were his spiritual seed.

The kingdom of the heavens, then, is at hand. The Father has revealed himself. The Son has died and risen again, and is now seated at the right hand of power in the glory of the Father. And the Holy Spirit is poured out upon all flesh. Wherefore it is the duty of all men to repent.

3. In referring to the prediction here cited, we again remark that we are not restricted to the mere citation, which is rather the index to the whole. Matthew has already taught us how to read those things which were written before for our learning, and not to narrow the Old Testament Scriptures to the mere citations found in the New. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God; speak comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her"—the days of the earthly Jerusalem were at an end—her warfare was accomplished, and the kingdom, the heavenly Jerusalem, was at hand. Whatever may have been the sins of Jerusalem, aggravated by her transgressions, whereby she denied her distinctive calling and name, despising her special blessings, sins greater than those of the whole world, her iniquity is pardoned, and she receives of the Lord *double* for all her sin. What language can convey a testimony to a full and free redemption as this? What is this consolation but a levelling of all? It is thus the way of the Lord is prepared. Men high in their position, esteemed for their moral worth, distinguished for their social excellencies,—these mountains must be brought low. Others, who follow their vicious appetites with a mind diseased, demoralized in the indulgence of a depraved nature,—these valleys are to be exalted. Others, prostituting the gifts of God, and subjecting them to vanity, turning them out of their way,—these crooked shall be made straight. And, lastly, others playing fast and loose with spiritual truths, eternal realities, scandalizing others,—these rough ones shall be made plain. And this because the glory of

God is revealed. It is the purpose of him that all flesh shall see it, shall "behold their God."

What shall I cry? asks the preacher. The answer, if men would only consider it, is a very humiliating one.

Whatever may be done by all the outward tendencies of the present day, the humiliating truth is, "All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth." Whatever distinctions society may impose, the truth levels all; for what is born of the flesh is flesh. However, the kingdom of the heavens is at hand, and to realise it is repentance.

So long as we live in the flesh we have no repentance,—we are not in the kingdom,—we have not the Spirit, we abide not in the Father and in the Son. There was no repentance when Pharaoh said he had sinned against Jehovah, yet continued still on his way; nor, when Saul sought the pardon of his sins, while he continued a child of disobedience; nor, like Ahab when he went softly before the Lord, and put on sackcloth as the outward form of the true to which he was yet a stranger, as his outward life too plainly showed. Nor, is it penance—the enduring of a penalty or punishment; nor the doing of any act as a satisfaction for sin; nor any affection of the mind, the sincerity of which is shown in some exterior form or manifestation, as sitting in sackcloth and ashes—the mortification of the flesh by various means, as by fasting and tears. And we must guard against that language which, although apparently correct, is radically wrong—"that no man can repent until he sees that his whole life has been one continued state of rebellion against God, and that everlasting destruction from his presence is his portion—that until a man has this view of himself he will never be thoroughly broken and contrite, will never loathe and abhor himself for his iniquities—and that he will not have this till the Son himself reveals it unto him." Whereas the Lord has already revealed it, and is continually revealing it to him.

Mark and Luke have "repentance *into* remission of sins." This form respects the two principles of the kingdom. Repentance is Christ in us: by whom we are crucified to the world and the world to us. This is the *μετανοια* or change of mind. It is the way of the Lord—the way he enters the soul; then

remission is the result of the partaking of the Holy Spirit. This is the purpose of the Father. And our condemnation is not making effective the grace of God freely given to all.

The testimony of the Baptist is, Behold the Lord God will come with a strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him, and his reward is with him. He will overthrow all that is adverse to us, deliver us from this body of death, and all that would reign within, and bestow upon us his reward, even the fulness of God.

The Baptist, in the very habit of his life, outwardly expressed his own teaching. It was the expression of the inward reality. The flesh had no power over him in the lust of it, for his food was locusts and wild honey. It is indeed possible to live like the Baptist, and to follow him in this respect to the very letter, and yet with no renunciation of the old nature. It must not be forgotten that he was an instrument *visibly and tangibly* to make known the truth. Repentance is not addressed to the outward forms of carnality, either of mind or body, as idolatry or adultery, or any other abomination which is an unmistakeable witness that we are in the flesh, but to the putting off of the corrupt nature altogether. Put away this, and the outward will go with it. And so on the other hand, subsisting on locusts and wild honey may most expressively convey the idea that the inward desires and propensions are in subjection to righteousness. His raiment was of camel's hair—a loose and rough garment, with a leathern girdle about his loins. He had put away the lust of the eyes, and so external things, even the most necessary, had no charm, nor attraction in his eyes.

Though he literally dwelt in the wilderness, he was truly clay in the hand of the potter—made a vessel of honour, and taught the world how to stand in the kingdom of the heavens. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, must be given up before we can enter there.

Nowhere throughout the Word is one carnal indulgence allowed, which important truth the Baptist by his life would inculcate. His baptism was the outward sign—the *expression* of repentance. It was administered by immersion. By which the proselyte signified a death and burial; and rising again, as a neophyte, he would live no longer to the flesh. Scholasticism makes John's baptism and Christ's to be different—the former is called a βαπτ

τισμα μετανοιας, the latter a λουτρον παλιγγενεσιας. What difference is there between a baptism of repentance and a washing of regeneration? Outwardly they are the same, inwardly they are the same; only one, by its words, respects a past condition, the other, a future.

The form of John's baptism was εις τον ερχομενον—into one coming. That, as many received him, to them he gave power to become sons of God. And what is the washing of regeneration? which has nothing to do with baptism, which, as a sign, points in the same direction to the reality.

We require, so long as we are here, a continual washing, even as often as we require the regeneration, that is, the *renewing* of the Holy Ghost. This washing of regeneration is thus enforced by Christ when he washed Peter's feet. For so long as the Christian has contact with visible things, so long as he walks on this earth, the soul will, like the feet, contract defilement, and it must be continually washed. For he that is wholly washed, has received and is striving to live the truth, will need save only to wash his feet, but is clean every whit. Yet, if he does not come for this repeated washing—this washing of regeneration—he *has no part in Christ*. For to contract defilement—to *be one with the flesh*—is to be identified with it. But to repent is to cast it off, to put it away as an unclean thing, to be washed from its filth, that our souls may be one with God in the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

This distinctive truth, taught by the baptism of John, is continually enforced by Christ. Christ is exalted as a Prince to give repentance. Therefore everyone is to be baptized in his name,—having first repented then has he remission of sins, possessing the Holy Ghost. *The names Christ Jesus correspond to the washing and renewing of the Holy Ghost respectively.*

The Lord, after his resurrection, commanded the Apostles to wait for the promise of the Father, saying, John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. The one was a baptism of death, the other of life. The former had its fulfilment in the death of Christ, in whom all died; of which baptism was the witness, *the expression*. The whole teaching of the Lord Jesus was how to put off the flesh, that the Father might be revealed in us.

The dialogue in Acts xix. explains this important truth. If that passage be not understood, then the office of the Baptist as the forerunner is not. Paul asks, "Into what were you baptized?" The answer is simple enough. Into the baptism of John, that is into death, a separation from the world, the flesh, and sin; in a word *into Christ*, which is a baptism into repentance—the putting off the old man altogether. Then were they baptized *into Jesus*, and they received the Holy Ghost.

Peter shows how a true baptism saves us. Not the sign, nor the sacrament, but the reality—that which is effected without hands. Not, he says, the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience *in God*. He enforces the reality, *and it in its completeness*.

6. John baptized in Jordan. May we not ask, like Naaman of old, Why Jordan? We have the word of God, and therefore can give the reply. Matthew leads us back to the wanderings of his fathers. He has set before us the going down into Egypt, the bringing up out of Egypt, the wilderness condition, and now he leads us to Jordan, as the way to the promised land—the kingdom of the heavens. The Jewish nation represented the world. Their redemption was a guarantee of that of the whole world—the redemption of all men. The wilderness condition was a witness to it; for God was in their midst—the blessing that constituted the land of promise, the glory of all lands. For forty years, signifying a life, were they thus embraced by the covenant. Thus had God done all that could be done. But they perished in the wilderness, having no faith. Faith is the substance—the reality—all that God has done in Christ Jesus, made effective in the soul. It is the faithful, and they only, who pass over Jordan into the land of promise. This faith is set forth by the Lord Jesus to Paul, (Acts xxvi. 18) having *repentance and an inheritance* "by faith which is into me." But what evidence is there that they who crossed Jordan into the land of promise had faith any more than they who came up out of Egypt into the wilderness and *perished there*? We must not look for more than that which is *outward*. Then, this faith is represented by the one generation dying and another springing up. So successive generations among men continually witness to the truth of the covenant, as it is in Christ Jesus. John baptizing

in Jordan indicated thereby the necessity of faith, which is the substance to which all the shadows testify.

7. Multitudes came confessing their sins. This outward act would at least signify true repentance, and this is its use here. Further, it may have been an expression of humility—a readiness to receive the distinctive teaching of the Baptist. But among them were Pharisees and Sadducees. These were hypocrites, and they represent all such as strangers to the truth, and in antagonism to the purpose of the Father.

We have already seen how the Baptist, in his doctrine, life, and baptism, enforces the one indispensable element of a true Nazarene—a separation from all uncleanness, wherefore they who would be baptized of him must possess the same.

The Pharisees came, they would say, our name, life, teaching, witness to this. As the world's moral men, they separated themselves from their fellow men. By washings, mortifications, fasting, they professed to put off the uncleanness of the flesh. But to put off the flesh, to separate their own souls from this union, which no man can do, and which he will do in repentance, but in Christ, they did not. Thus saith Jehovah, They seek me daily, and delight to know my ways as a nation that did righteousness; they ask of me the ordinances of righteousness; they take delight in approaching to God. *They fast; they afflict their souls.* But they understand not the true fasting, the true afflicting—the separating of the soul from the flesh in its uncleanness. They bow down their heads as a bulrush; they spread sackcloth and ashes; they fast for a day, and think this is the separation which God has chosen, instead of breaking every yoke and letting the oppressed go free.

The Sadducees, whether they derived their name from Sadok, a high priest, or Zedek, righteousness, is immaterial. It is easy to perceive how these two classes of religionists stand in direct opposition to the two principles of the covenant set forth by the Baptist and Jesus respectively. A like opposition is signified by the Lord speaking of dogs and swine in his sermon on righteousness. The Sadducees were the educated class—they represent the carnal mind in its development. They have respect to the Pentateuch, because of its precepts and moral requirements. They strive for moral conformity to it, apart from all spiritual influ-

ences. Into these two classes, who discipline the body and train the mind, the world, in its best aspect, is mainly divided.

Thus we may understand the ground the Baptist takes. He unmasks the world's great ones. He well knew what the flesh was, though it came counterfeiting all that is true and holy, and he spake accordingly. He called them a generation of vipers, even as the Lord did, when he told them they were of their father the devil. The uncrucified heart is the same everywhere, and at all times.

9. These men patched the old garment—the Baptist put it off altogether. They rested in their descent from Abraham and not from him, who is the Father of the spirits of all flesh. The children of the true Abraham are of promise, born of the Spirit of promise, begotten of the everlasting Father, born in the Covenant. Such, then, as ye are, such sons of Abraham can God make of these stones, for such is the hardened heart of man that obeys not the truth. But true sons are not from any created thing, but of God.

10. Men do not begin with the root, but with the branch. They readily confess their sins, but do not put off sin, the source, fount, and spring of all transgression. However, the axe is laid at the root of the trees. All nature is impressed with the eternal principles of the covenant, and the common paths are the most eloquent. Hence vegetation, and trees in particular, are expressive signs of truth. The root, we have already remarked, is buried; and from the buried part, the sap, the life flows, and empties itself into fruit. The axe is laid at the root. Let that be right, and the tree will bring forth good fruit. The Baptist, consistent with all he taught, would then lead these men to the hidden recesses of their hearts, which are open before God, however they regarded only that which was seen of man.

Branch after branch may be lopped off—one evil habit after another, called, perhaps, besetting sins, but the whole must be dealt with at the root, for until this be the case there can be no fruits meet for repentance. Redemption is wrought, the body of sin destroyed, the enmity slain, and the kingdom at hand; every tree, therefore, which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

11. Where the truth taught by the Baptist is found, there will be the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and with fire. The baptism

of John is symbolized by water, that of Christ by fire, for God is a consuming fire. And so fire is the symbol of holiness. Where Christ is there is no compromise with the flesh. If, then, we have been baptized into Christ, it is followed by the baptism of the HOLY GHOST, and all the dross of earthly mindedness is purged away, and the pure gold reflects the perfect will of God.

There is none other foundation than that is laid, Jesus Christ. Then let every man take heed how he build thereupon. Every man's work shall be made manifest, because it shall be revealed by fire. The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. The holiness of a Triune God will test the work, and what cannot bear this test will be destroyed. Yet the builder shall be saved, but only as by fire. He must go through the same test, for without holiness shall no man see the Lord. There is, then, no misunderstanding the distinct teaching of the Baptist. And in referring to the 1st Psalm he shows that these truths are no new doctrine, but that the same principles pervade the law in which man should continually meditate.

Moses was commanded of the Lord, that everything that may abide the fire ye shall make go through the fire, and it shall be clean ; nevertheless, it shall be purified with the *water of separation* : and all that abideth not the fire ye shall make go through the water.

The relation in which the Baptist stood to the Lord Jesus is not the least important truth offered for our consideration. The Baptist said, He that cometh after me is mightier than I. The Baptist was of the earth, a child of Adam, and was no stranger to sin. He felt its power, but he renounced it and the flesh altogether. The Lord Jesus was mightier than he. He took flesh and blood that he might destroy him that had the power of death—the devil. And in death he spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. This is the ground of our repentance, and here Christ is mightier than the Baptist, for without him he was nothing.

He was also mightier than he, because he cometh after him, for the Baptist is his forerunner. I must decrease, says the Baptist, and he must increase. Every one who knows true repentance knows this. Being in Christ, he must decrease *and the Spirit* must increase. Herein he is one with God. If not, he is a

stranger to holiness, and his depraved nature develops itself, hardening more and more against the activities of a never-failing love.

In the Nazarite character the Baptist brings out prominently one side ; the Lord Jesus the other. Here we cannot fail to perceive how the divine life is mightier than the separation from evil. The Son of David, in the overthrow of all his enemies, is not so mighty as the Son of Abraham, in all the power of the Paternal love. Paul expresses the experience of men when he writes, *Though I have all faith to move mountains, yet if I have not love, I am nothing.* And how true are his words, *Though I may know all prophecies, and understand all mysteries, yet if I have not love I am nothing.*

As yet we have not apprehended the exact position the Baptist holds in the economy of grace—that is, the relation in which he stood to the Lord, whereby he was distinguished above all other men. Through him we are taught what we could scarcely have learned in any other way, that the Lord himself not only put off sinful flesh, but took the common ground of all men, that he might be our Exemplar.

Christianity is no sentimental speculation : we are redeemed and we are called to follow Christ.

The Lord Jesus is our pattern-man. He must pass through the waters of separation before he is baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire. But how should he who was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, do this? How should he, who was pure and without spot—the immaculate One of God, in whom dwelt no sin—do this? On the cross he was made sin for us, which entailed upon him the most bitter pang in his whole experience—a sense of separation from the everlasting Father—which continued until the holiness of God as a consuming fire had purged away the sin of the world. He there passed through a death no language can describe. But here we behold him with his work anticipated, and, in the likeness of sinful flesh, showing through the Baptist, as his forerunner, what his own baptism expressed.

The Baptist, as the forerunner of the Lord, stands in a peculiar relation to him, and teaches a truth which otherwise would be ignored, if not lost sight of altogether—how that the Lord's

baptism of water and of the Spirit was one of death as well as of life—a *death to sin preceding the life to God*. Wherefore every man must pass through the water of separation before he can bear the consecration of his God on his head.

13. If we have followed the mind of the Evangelist, we are now prepared for the baptism of the Lord Jesus. It was no mere ceremony. It is said the fathers, with one voice, proclaim the remission of sins through the instrumentality of water in baptism. Let us not trouble ourselves with what the fathers say; the Bible tells us that in Christ Jesus is *perfect* remission, and we have this only when in him we are in the likeness of his death and the likeness of his resurrection. Of this, baptism is the sign, and the seal. Every child coming into this world is lightened by the Son of God—that by the grace of the everlasting Father, through the work of Christ and the Holy Ghost in every child, sin is dead and the spirit lives; of which, baptism, as circumcision of old, is the witness.

If we would but follow the teaching of the Old Testament, which was written for our learning, and to which the Scribes of the New continually referred, we should there learn the covenant of God. God does not give a sign without first giving the thing signified. We have already referred to the going down into Egypt and the bringing up again out of it; the wilderness condition for forty years, and the passage of Jordan into the land of promise; but what are we to understand by the passage of the Red Sea? How did Paul read it? He first bears testimony to the universal tendency of the covenant. (1 Cor. x. 1.) In Egypt God had destroyed *all* his enemies—and so set his people free. It attested the redemption of all men; yet, it is for each man, for himself, to make that redemption effective. Baptism, then, is not the giving of what is already bestowed. It is *the outcoming, the expression*—as fruit is of the inward sap—of the reality within. The Apostle says, I would not that ye should be ignorant how all our fathers passed through the sea, and were all baptized into Moses. Now, Moses lived one hundred and twenty years—three periods of forty years. Forty in Egypt, forty in the wilderness, and forty with God,—the first two, before he brought the children of Israel out of Egypt. He then, so to speak, attested bondage and redemption. This is the truth to which baptism parti-

cularly points. To be baptized, then, into Moses, signified, at that time, how that they made effective, or ought to have, the redemption of their God. God taught this in the passage of the Red Sea. It was the putting off of the fleshly nature, that in the spiritual they might serve God, and so the Egyptians were vessels of dishonour, and the Israelites of honour.

14. John forbade him. It was consistent with him to do so. He knew him as one mightier than himself, as the Lord from heaven ; and it was only when he received the predicted sign, in the descent of the Holy Spirit, that he understood and knew him *in all the fulness and glory* of his work. Whatever discrepancies may be alleged about John knowing, and not knowing, they are reconciled by the words of Jesus. The Baptist might truly say, How shall I, who am nothing, who am but dust and ashes, do this to thee, who art my King and my God ? The meek and gentle One answers, Suffer now. Thankful indeed must the Church of God ever be that the Baptist drew back and hesitated, and so called forth from the lips of the Lord a confirmation of all that the Evangelist has already advanced. For thus, he says, it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. These momentous words leave no doubt of the meaning of the Lord's baptism, or of righteousness. The former must be, in order to the latter—more, the Lord here identifies himself with all men. Man must die to sin before he can possess the righteousness of God. This righteousness must work, and he must fulfil it. Yea, he must fulfil all righteousness, and he cannot do this till he is dead and buried with Christ, which death and burial are represented by baptism. In no man can God work to will and to do of his good pleasure, until he possesses the mind which was in Christ Jesus. And it was now that the Baptist learned the deep truth that he was not only the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, but also the Son from whom the Spirit of adoption should come.

It is worthy of notice that Matthew does not record any descent of the Holy Ghost on those whom John had previously baptized. It was only when the Spirit was poured out on the Lord Jesus that the Baptist understood the deep things of God. As yet Christ had not been crucified, the Spirit had not been poured out as on the day of Pentecost, attesting the full purpose

of God as accomplished ; but in the baptism of the Lord Jesus it was implied.

He is the light of the world, not only as lighting every man coming into the world, but as witnessing to his own kingdom established. In him that city which is set upon a hill *cannot* be hid. In him the life of every righteous man is to be understood. The great principles of his everlasting kingdom must be established in us, as they were in him, if we are to take him as our Example and follow his steps. He was baptized with water and the Spirit, both visibly, distinctly, and in this order. And it is only as we put off the flesh, as he has set us the example, that we shall be able to fulfil all righteousness.

16. The Spirit descended as a dove, and lighted upon him. It is indeed only when the filth of the flesh is washed away in the judgment of God, as in the scouring of the waters, that the dove can find rest for the sole of her feet. The olive branch of peace will never be found within us till this takes place. For since the Holy Ghost descends into the soul, filling it with the fulness of God, by whom righteousness works, it is not until the death of Christ is made effective within—when it is attested by the Father, as he says, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

CHAPTER IV.

1 THEN was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of
2 the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was
3 afterward an hungered. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If
4 thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But
he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but
by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a
6 pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast
thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning
thee: and in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash
7 thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou
shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and
9 showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and
saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and
10 worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is
written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou
serve.

11 Then the devil leaveth him; and, behold, angels came and ministered
unto him.

12 NOW when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed
13 into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum,
which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim:
14 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,
15 The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, *by* the way of the sea,
16 beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness
saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death
17 light is sprung up. From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say
Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

18 AND Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called
Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were
19 fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers
20 of men. And they straightway left *their* nets, and followed him. And
21 going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James *the son* of Zebedee,
and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their

22 nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.

23 AND Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness
24 and all manner of disease among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and
25 he healed them. And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and *from* Decapolis, and *from* Jerusalem, and *from* Judæa, and *from* beyond Jordan.

IF we have clearly apprehended the simple truths made known to us in Jesus Christ, as our Redeemer, or as the Nazarene, one feature of which is seen in the Baptist, we are now prepared for the other, in the Lord being led by the Spirit.

Then was Jesus led by the Spirit. Then, and not till then, when the grace of God is made effective in the heart, can any man be led of the Spirit. Then, and then only, can he be tempted, and the conflict take place to which our attention is now drawn, that we may know what to expect and how to act in our Christian course.

What more touching incident can be found in the life of Christ, as revealing the paternity of God, or to show that he was the Son of Abraham, than this?—or, one more calculated to dispel the mists which encompass those who ignore this higher relation, putting prominently forward the human nature of Christ with its sympathies. Whereas, we are sons of God, being born of him.

The descent of the Holy Ghost in a visible form was not only full of parabolic teaching, but also an unanswerable argument that Christ, in his Nazarite character, possessed the consecration of his God upon his head; even as it was represented by tongues of fire on the day of Pentecost.

The argument, that as many as are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God, is grounded on the truth here clearly revealed in Christ Jesus. Many, failing to see this, simple as it is, confess that it is a matter of difficulty to show who are the sons of God, and what are the discriminating marks of that sonship. They multiply signs, they hamper us with names and notions, without

any distinct idea of the truth. However, the inspired penmen give in every part of their several writings the one only test—that of the Nazarene.

No one can be led by the Spirit till he is separate from the flesh. It is only when the deeds of the body are mortified that God works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure. Many, as of old, seek the Lord daily, delight to approach him and to know his ways, freely talk of the depravity of their carnal nature, that they loathe and abhor it; yet, alas! cleave to it and will not part with it. They have a semblance of the truth; they separate themselves from their fellow men, and in all such separation they are still in the power of their carnal and selfish nature.

Nothing can be more important to any one than the assurance that he is a child of God. Now, the Spirit *is ever* striving with all men, and showing them Christ. He, then, that cannot in the Spirit cry Abba Father, is a stranger to the freedom that is in Christ; for the Holy Spirit dwells in us, and leads us only in our separation from sin in Christ.

Every place connected with the life of the Lord Jesus is of the deepest interest, and in particular the wilderness, the scene of one of the most awful and mysterious conflicts in the history of the world. Expositors generally refer to its locality. But we should not forget that it is *the common ground* of the Lord and his forerunner. Failing to perceive this, we miss one of the most comforting truths in the Word of God. Why should not the wilderness, where John lived and preached, be the same as where Christ was tempted? Anyhow, they are the same in *their spiritual* import.

The wilderness of old, in its truest sense, was *the condition* of the Jews because of redemption. And, instead of earnestly desiring the land of promise, typical of the Spirit of promise, who is our inheritance, they lusted for the flesh-pots of Egypt. How could they desire the land of promise so long as their hearts were in Egypt? They could not go back, being redeemed; they did not go forward, because they did not realise redemption; and so, they perished in the wilderness.

The wilderness is the condition of all men. No man can stay the hand of Jehovah, and say, what doest thou? Redemption cannot be reversed, yet men neglect so great salvation.

The wilderness, then, is the common ground on which the redeeming arm of God has placed us. And since Christ was tempted in all points, like as we are, yet without sin, he is able to sympathize with, and so succour, all who are likewise tempted.

The kingdom of the heavens—the promised land—is realised in the renunciation of the flesh and in the indwelling Spirit. But as the old nature revives and troubles us, we are then, as it were, in the wilderness where the battle is fought, and as we overcome we realise the kingdom. Thus we go in and out and find pasture.

All are redeemed and in the wilderness; and, if we possess what we profess, we have passed into the kingdom, being true Nazarites, children of the Lord God Almighty, touching not the unclean thing. And when tempted we are led by the Spirit into the wilderness that we may overcome in the power of redemption, through the cross of Christ, even as he overcame, which will result in a further and more blessed experience of the kingdom of the heavens.

The Lord fasted forty days. There is but one fast in the Pentateuch, and that on the day of Atonement. On that day the Israelite humbled himself, afflicted his soul, and so was called to realise all that was thus outwardly expressed—that sin was borne away no more to be remembered. Fasting was the very expressive sign of putting off the flesh, and so afflicting his soul in a separation from sin. Weeping is oftentimes found with it—“I wept in the fasting of my soul.” Weeping would express an humbling sense of the presence of evil, with which the soul is continually in contact.

The Lord Jesus, by his fasting, did not seek thereby to propitiate the divine favour, much less to commend himself to man. Nothing is more puerile than to say his retirement and seclusion from the world was to improve the solemnity of his baptism; or, that he continued in a total forbearance from food for the space of forty days and forty nights, in order that his whole attention might be given to meditation and prayer. Nor, from it, can it be said, that we have frequent and urgent occasions, and might find opportunities of leisure for religious privacy.

2. The Lord fasted forty days. This mystic number, in its radicle,

indicates the purpose of God respecting *all men*; and, with respect to its multiple, the fasting forty days intimates that all should be Nazarites *from the womb*.

In spiritual things, a day is often set for a year. Forty years the Jews were in the wilderness. They were redeemed, and for forty years the Spirit of the Lord led them, to humble them, and to prove them, that they might know *what was in their heart*. Forty years is a generation, and expresses a life. The forty days of the Lord's temptation, then, teaches us that we are during our life in the wilderness, and that during the whole of our life we should be Nazarites unto God.

We have already noticed the different phases in the life of Moses—a life in Egypt, a life in the wilderness, a life in the kingdom enjoying the presence of God. These three phases of truth were experienced by Moses, whatever may be said of his dying before the Israelites entered the land of promise. They teach distinctive truth. Every one, then, who lives a Christian life passes through them—he is in Egypt, and knows the burden of sin; he comes out of it experiencing redemption, crucifying the flesh, and so is in the wilderness; then living according to the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, he walks in the light, as God is in the light. Thus we dwell not so much upon the ideas of place as of condition of life, and these are clear and distinct in their consecutive order.

Thus the forty days' temptation, and the forty days after the resurrection, *in their mutual relation*, would correspond to the truths set forth by the last two forty years of Moses' life. In the temptation we have the proof that the cross is a reality—that sin is destroyed, and that the Lord Jesus, as a Christian, is dead to all that is in the world, and of the world. In the resurrection we have the proof of the new life, the resurrection life; so of one walking in the enjoyment, not of the things of this world, or of this life, but of the kingdom of God.

But here it may be asked, Why does not the Lord Jesus wait until he is forty years old before he shows himself to Israel? Moses was full forty years old before it came into his heart to visit his brethren, to avenge them and to smite the oppressor. Then why does not the Lord Jesus wait till he is of like age? The simple answer is, that he reveals *a life* according to his

name, Christ Jesus, in a triumph over sin and a life to God, which would correspond to the last two forty years in the life of Moses. We remark further that it is, as a rule, not necessary to carry out an analogy to its utmost limit, if the idea intended be already clearly conveyed. What here remains may be applied to another purpose. However, the period corresponding to the first two forty years in Moses' life would, with regard to the Lord, be expressed by the Baptist; but he is limited to thirty years, and this because of another and far higher truth in the person of the Lord himself, for whose sake the Baptist, as his forerunner, must be thirty years.

The mystic numbers are ever constant to their deep lines of signification. Three is the symbol of the Trinity. Ten of totality. The Lord, then, apart from other considerations, would, at thirty years, attest *in his relation to the Baptist*, that he had not only put off the flesh, but was also filled with the *fulness of God*. And this is the covenant for all men.

This is further confirmed in the relative signification of the single forty years of Moses' life, and the thirty of the Lord's—*both* as expressive of his life. The connexion in which Moses and the Lord stood, as revealing the truth, is identical with that of the law and the gospel. Moses is faithful, as a servant—the Lord Jesus, as a Son. As a servant, Moses revealed redemption, a deliverance, a death to sin; notwithstanding, he gave place to the flesh and sin revived; wherefore he died, and did not enter the land of promise—so, *visibly* setting forth truth. But as a Son the Lord reveals the Father. While Moses, then, by his number 40, as a multiple of 4, the number of all flesh, indicates the redemption of all men in Christ: the Lord, as a Son, by his of 30, how that all the blessings of a Triune God were bestowed on all. So that it might be truly said that the promise in all its fulness is to Abraham and his seed, in whom all the families of the earth are blessed.

We are asked by the most thoughtful and cultivated minds, What reason can you give why an infinite God should create a world subject to such wretchedness and woe, as history and our own experience so abundantly witness? The *ultima ratio* is, It pleased Jehovah, in covenant relation, to reveal himself as a Father. Beyond this we cannot go. And if it be conceded

without regard to anything consequent upon it, we have a clear and intelligible starting point.

A Father reveals himself. His will is, "The elder shall serve the younger." This is no arbitrary decree, for the Father serves his children. The Son will hereafter gird himself, and serve those who shall inherit his glory; and the Holy Spirit of God in his condescending love serves man—we serve, we love him, because he first loved us.

Two races of intelligent beings are created to witness to the Father—the elder to serve the younger. Now, since man came forth, in adoption, in the image of God, he is possessed of a will, and his happiness consists in its freedom, which freedom is manifested only when he subordinates his own will to the will of God. It is God's own will working in us that constitutes our blessedness. Hence the Lord cried, "Not my will but thy will be done." Who can tell what is involved in the liberty of the will, as it has power to adopt, or reject the will of God? Our will is indeed not free till the holy will of God is established within. If this be the normal condition of men and of angels, then it must stand independently of all that is adverse to it. Nor, is the will of the Father responsible, because in the exercise of its freedom, the will of the creature has supplanted that of the Creator—the creature dethrones the Creator, and usurps his place; hence the origin of sin and its consequences.

In due time man was created, for a little while lower than the angels, to be afterwards crowned with glory and honour. But against the purpose of the Father, the brightest of created intelligences rebelled. It was pride; it had its birth in heaven, and we are warned lest we, being lifted up with pride, fall into the condemnation of the devil. I beheld, says the Lord, Satan fall from heaven. And the prophet writes, How art thou fallen from heaven,—O Lucifer, O day star, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will *ascend* into heaven,—I will *exalt* my throne *above* the stars of God: I will sit also upon the *mount*, in the sides of the north: I will *ascend* above the clouds;—I will be *like the Most High*. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell—to the sides of the pit. (Is. xiv. 12—17.) It is said, by those who take the mere letter, this was the doom of Babylon.

It was indeed Babylon, but it is all the language of pride reaping shame—the sin and doom of Lucifer.

Sin, then, is not only against the purposes of God, but seizes on the inheritance; it usurps the Paternity. John writes, He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. So the Lord says, Ye are of your *father* the devil, who is a murderer and a liar from the beginning—he abode not in the truth. But if we abide in the truth, we are born of God—sons of God, heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ—of all the glory of the Father.

In the fall of man, the Tempter approached our first parents and said, “Ye shall be as Gods” (Elohim)—be one with the covenant Ones, even that which God had promised. The danger in the lie is in its plausibility, when words of truth are made the vehicle for it. These are words of truth, and through them Satan effected the fall. The Lord, addressing men, said, “Ye are Gods to whom the Word of God cometh, and the Scripture cannot be broken.” Man was created in adoption, and though he has fallen, the Son of God has restored all things. Nevertheless, Satan works in order to defeat on earth what he opposed in heaven. Under cover of the truth, he proposes a way which is not of God, and by which he changes the truth into a lie, that man may serve the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.

The condemnation of Satan was that of pride: On thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat. Hast thou exalted thyself? then thou shalt be abased. Shame follows on the heels of pride, and many, who have lifted up themselves, shall hereafter awake from the dust to shame and everlasting contempt.

Sin is the origin of all the evil in the world; and if we perceive how successfully Satan tempted our first parents, are we to doubt the historic fact of the Lord’s temptation, or that Satan was a personal agent in the matter?

The temptation of Christ was one, not of an ungodly, but of a righteous man. An ungodly man is not tempted—he simply obeys the will of the flesh, and oftentimes strives hard to tempt the devil. The temptation of Christ was to prove his faith, whether he was in truth the Son of David the Son of Abraham. The temptation of a righteous man is to prove Christ—that Christ, in the power of his cross and the power of his resurrection, may be

fully established within, that we may be perfect in the Son of God. And yet every man so tempted is tempted of the devil, for God tempts no man. Thus all things work together for good to them that love God, and are called according to his purpose. All are so called, but all do not obey. And they who do obey are the elect; *they make effective that which is every man's birthright*, and to them all things work together for good. No man is tempted above what he is able to bear, and with the temptation God makes a way of escape. He does not diminish the temptation, nor does he take it upon himself, but enables the righteous to bear it, who takes the way of escape, and which is Christ crucified. He is our strength, and we realise him more truly according to our need. Whatever, then, may be our experience, let us bear the afflictions of the Gospel *according to the power of God*.

It was permitted Jesus to be tempted. He was led by the Spirit to this. He realised the same way of escape. In all the circumstances of his temptation there was nothing to mitigate its force, yet he stood through the cross and the anointing from above.

It is asked, Could Christ have fallen? Was the temptation a reality? To both these questions some reply, Yes; some, No. The question is dismissed with a barren monosyllable, because it is too often only a matter of speculation instead of possessing the truth. Christ is our Exemplar. In the garden of Gethsemane, in the most bitter pangs of his passion, he bore witness that his human will was subordinated to, or merged in, the will of his Father. In the exercise of his will he had in this way power to stand, yet was free to fall. To have fallen he would have been the first to have trodden under foot his own Sonship, to have condemned the Father, to have made the truth a lie, to have denied the Son of David the Son of Abraham, to have annihilated his own proper Deity.

If we would learn by the temptation of Christ in its application to ourselves, let us observe that Scripture does not recognise what is called a besetting sin. It tells us to lay aside every weight *and sin* which doth so easily beset us. It is sin itself, and not a besetting sin. If there were any doubt, the context would immediately dissipate it.

We may take an imperfect standard of life, even that, the most approved of society, with its Bible in its hand, yet be only in

the flesh, because the cross of Christ, in all its severe and stern reality, is not effective in us, and so fall into habitual sins. Sin has no power over us only as we lay aside the cross. It is a mistake, therefore, to suppose that besetting sins have a special power over the Christian. Why, or how can he, if he be in Christ, recognise them? Throughout life he must expect temptation, and that in the most trying and searching form. It may be without any mitigation of its power, but let him be prepared for it.

In the fall of man the history of the world was gathered up as in a germ. He was warned that in the day he ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he should surely die. The man and the woman both ate of it, *and they died*; as in the Hebrew idiom it is forcibly expressed—dying, they died. Then the Elohim said, The man has become as one of us to know, or rather in the gerundial form, “*by knowing good and evil.*” It was the purpose of a Triune God that “man should become as one of us.” Even as the Son prayed, That they may be one as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they may be one in us. He revealed the Father. His prayer was the Father’s will. This could not be in a way contrary to the will of God, as in eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This tree, and the eating of its fruit, would express the *condition of the man and woman*. This tree, perhaps, was the most magnificent and attractive in the garden of Eden. All things, as they came forth from the hand of God, were very good. Those from him who sinned from the beginning were only evil. The prohibition, then, not to eat of the tree of good and evil warned them of the danger in which they stood, and that the consequences of their eating would be a death, not from any arbitrary decree, but from the very nature of things; for how could man, though the noblest work of God, having in the knowledge of evil separated himself from the source of life, be one with the Elohim?

The history of the world is the fruit of this tree. Planted in the paradise of God, it was the emblem of sin—like the pillar of saltless salt of Lot’s wife; or the golden censers of Korah and other Levites against their own souls. This tree warned them of him who had fallen from the loftiest place, nearest the throne of God, to the most degraded, and who comes in the most attractive form of creature life to seduce man from his true allegiance to God.

The words of Jehovah were made the vehicle of sin. Thus the Tempter seeks to draw away unstable souls.

When the woman saw that the fruit was good for food, that it was an earnest desire to the eyes, and a tree to be sought for to make one wise, she partook of it. (Gen. iii. 6.) These words of Eve's enfold within themselves the history of the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

We are now brought to consider more particularly the Lord's temptation. If any dispute the reality of the fact, and are contentious because of the difficulties, we simply remark that the where? and the how? are of little moment; but the truths here made known are all-important. No pen but that of the Spirit of God could have set forth the history of the world so expressly, forcibly, and incontrovertibly, yet so succinctly, as we trace it here and in the Lord's temptation. And whether we regard the gradual unfolding from the beginning, or the comprehensive character of the present age, it attests the truth that all that is in the world is not of the Father, in whom alone is the one source of life.

The world presents three distinct epochs bearing respectively the characteristic features of this fruit, and prominently coming forth in the order in which it was acceptable to the woman. To each of these epochs there is a crisis. In the first, the lust of the flesh was fully exhibited in the days of Noah, when it is said of it, they did eat, they drank, they married, and gave in marriage—things in themselves lawful and necessary, yet most expressive of a period when the fleshly appetites and desires gave unmistakable evidence that the men of that day turned the temporal blessings of God—typical of higher—to the mere enjoyment of their carnal nature, as their paradise and good. When the Spirit of God strove in vain and by a terrible judgment the truth was revealed, that the filth of the flesh must be washed away, though it be in the world's deluge.

The next epoch was when the lust of the eyes took the highest form, that of godliness. The old nature then was robed in the garment of religion, in the garb of a sanctimonious demeanor. In this their only desire was for all their works to be seen of men. In this was their pleasure, their reward.

They made a visible hierarchy the centre of union. They trod

the sacred precincts crying, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we." They claimed to be holier and more righteous than their fathers, yet they cast out the Holy One, they crucified him, who ever witnessed to the redeeming love of the Father, and who was the true temple of God; and so brought about a crisis in the destruction of the material temple—the desire of their eyes; and they themselves were as spiritual stones, cast down, trodden under foot of men, a reproach and by-word among all nations.

These two features now prominently stand out covering the best and fairest portions of the earth, and are only waiting for the third to constitute the complement. It is well known that so long as nations are under the blight of Mahomedanism and Romanism they cannot, with respect to success, compete with others on the great theatre of the world.

We now come to the third and last epoch. The tree was sought for—the tree of knowledge of good and evil to make one wise. This is the pride of life. It is the noblest form in which the counterfeit of the truth can exhibit itself, even intellect in its mighty prowess.

The intellect is one of God's best gifts. It is able to trace the goodness of God in all the wonders of scientific research. Every man would be a philosopher. Now education is the great thought of life; and the prediction is fulfilled that knowledge is increased.

In every part of the world, and in every department of science, philosophy is bringing out facts and establishing principles upon the incontrovertible law of induction; yet the truth is as cogent as when first uttered, "knowledge puffeth up"—it is the pride of life; and love, the law of the Spirit of life, which, operating within, builds the soul up in the kingdom of the heavens, grows cold, and so hastens on the last great crisis, the final judgment of mankind.

These epochs are not suddenly brought about. Nor is the transition abrupt. From the time of Adam to the bringing in of the hosts of Israel into the land of promise, the fleshly appetite predominated. Then was there a hankering for the pomp and circumstance of royalty—they wanted a king; God had proved himself a King, delivering them from all their spiritual enemies. Him they regarded not, but desired one after their own idea, which, with an outward and religious character, culminated in

the rejection of Christ, and continued on, not merely in the persecution of the Church of God, but in the heretical and schismatic corruptions of early Christianity to the dark ages: when, with the dawn of the Reformation and the revival of letters, the slumbering intellect of man awoke, and, like a giant refreshed with sleep, now exhibits itself in its fullest development, which will bring about the last—the final crisis in the advent of the Lord, who, when he comes, will not find faith upon the earth.

In all points was Christ tempted as we are, yet without sin. All that is in the world concentrated itself in its most malignant working against him. All circumstances seemed to favour it. Yet the Lord stood in the power of his cross, and having resisted all the fiery darts of the wicked one, *he yet stood* in the patient endurance of evil, in the power of the indwelling Spirit, leaving us an example to follow his steps.

Why, then, should the temptation of Christ be regarded as a strange and unaccountable thing? Ignore his Nazarene character, and it may be such, but if we would study him as our pattern man, it must be in the forty days' temptation.*

If we understand the Lord as the Nazarene, we understand how, with the Baptist—the two as one man—he represents the truth,—the putting off of the flesh, and the living in the Spirit to God. Here, then, is revealed to us man, not only redeemed and blessed, walking according to the Nazarene character; *but also as tempted and tried*, by whom, and how. Thus we are taught how that, with all the blessings of the covenant, and they effective within, we are exposed, through our corrupt and depraved nature,

* A morning paper writes: "Captain C. F. Hall has just been narrating, before the American Geographical Society, his recent Arctic experiences while in search of traces of the Franklin expedition, and took the opportunity of introducing to the Society the Esquimaux man whom he brought away with him—a hardy hunter, who has been known to stand for three days and nights motionless on the ice, beside a seal hole. Captain Hall described the ability of the Esquimaux to go without food as striking him as quite astounding. He has known them to do so for weeks. He heard of an instance in which a party of these intrepid seal hunters were floated off from the mainland on a park of ice, and did not return for thirty days, during which time they had not a morsel of food, yet they survived, although even their faithful and wonderful dogs succumbed to the pangs of hunger." (*Times*, Nov. 26, 1862.)

to all the assaults of the devil, and that Christ alone is our strength, by whom we overcome as he overcame.

Some consider the details of the temptation to be true and real; others, that they were certain mental or ideal representations wrought on the mind by diabolical agency, in a way somewhat like the visions and dreams of ancient prophets.

The whole temptation was similar to that in every man's experience: in every form of which the Lord would be the more sensitive, as he fully realised the covenant of God.

They, then, who are strangers to Christ and his walk of life, are still in the flesh, and are by nature enemies of God. They fulfil the desires of the carnal mind. About such, Satan does not busy himself. Living in that nature by which every abomination comes, they would tempt the devil, who says, Jesus I know, Paul I know; but who are ye?

The temptation was for forty days, teaching thereby, that our whole life is such, for the devil is ever, through our depraved nature, which lusts against the Spirit, seeking to beget in it fruit unto sin.

After forty days Jesus was an hungered. He was now at this trying time exposed to the concentrated malignity of Satan. But here is no yielding to the flesh, much less carnal indulgence. What can be more trying to the patience than the pangs of hunger. Satan, goaded by the remembrance of the past, and beholding the gracious purpose of the Father fulfilled, not only in the incarnation, but in all that baptism expressed and attested by heaven, comes, putting forth all the claims of the creature, saying, If thou be the Son of God, make these stones bread.

3. Temptation comes through the flesh. Often do the children of toil, even when the kingdom is set before them, exclaim, "We must live." The claims of this life are made paramount to those of another and a better world. Satan's lie is, "You must live: Eat. If thou be the Son of God, listen to these claims." Here is the old lie—good and evil. It is the one lie—the listening to the voice of the creature, rather than to the voice of God, within us. This is how we are to read the whole temptation. We see one aspect of the truth in the Baptist and Jesus—we see another in Satan and the Lord. The Lord Jesus feels the desire to eat, and he is urged, if he be the Son of God, to command that the stones be

made bread. If, then, we put off the flesh in Christ, we listen not to the voice of the creature, however plausible, or however pressing the temporal necessity, for it is death; *but we live by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*

What, then, is the ground the Lord takes? Does he regard man as redeemed or not? He had died and risen again. Then were all dead, all risen again; of which, the outpoured Spirit was a witness. So that the life of all is that which is hid in God, *with Christ.* (Col. iii. 1—3.) We must possess Christ in order to realise this life in God. The work of Christ, and the descent of the Spirit here anticipated, fully reveal the Father. Nothing is more erroneous than to say, Jesus resisted Satan in his humanity. It is diametrically opposed to the teaching of the Lord himself—who came putting off the flesh, and revealing that only which is divine. So was he the Son of God, “living not by bread alone;” but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. The advent of Jesus was to destroy the works of the devil, and he now witnessed that they were destroyed—that all men were set free, that the blessing of the Father, the blessing of everlasting life, was upon all men. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners; yet, co-extensive with this has been the blessing; yea, more, where sin hath abounded grace doth much more abound. Having redeemed us as sons, or rather having revealed himself as a Father through one Son, he draws us with the cords of a man. Not, indeed, by the humanity of the Lord Jesus, but by his own paternal love. Wherefore he has put into the hearts of men in the holy relationship of father and son, a mighty attractive influence, whereby the heart of one is turned to the other, and drawn with the bands of love.

5. Then the devil taketh him into the holy city, and setteth him on the pinnacle of the temple. Where should Jesus, as the King of the Jews, be but in the holy city? Where, as Melchizedek, but in the highest place of the temple? What, then, is his desire but that the people should receive him as their King—should have unmistakable evidence of him as the true Priest, who alone has entered the holiest of all, bearing, in his blood, our eternal life into the presence of the Father: whither we are to follow since the veil is rent, attesting our new life before God.

The tempter would now say, Manifest thyself that thy people may be willing. Prove thyself that thou art the Son of God. But how? He quotes the Scriptures. Yea, more, he interprets them. "Cast thyself down." What is this but a voluntary humility which often parades itself. But the humility of the covenant is to humble oneself under the mighty hand of Jehovah, who lays bare his redeeming arm, ever ready to deliver. For we cannot humble ourselves but in and through our King, who destroys every enemy.

In reconciling the two independent statements of the temptation, we have nothing to do with chronological order.

Matthew assumes a knowledge of the oracles of God. He takes a large and comprehensive view—the temptation of Eve in its threefold form, and according to its order, which in its gradual, yet comprehensive development, will at last issue in the colossal man—the Antichrist. Luke enforces no less than Matthew the universality of the truth, and the colossal man, and appears to have respect rather to the future than the past, and the full development of evil in the individual man, body, soul, and spirit. It is with regard to this threefold element of his being that Luke sets forth the individual man as he is restored in Jesus Christ.

Reverting to Matthew we observe that there is no place more dangerous than the pinnacle of the temple. Men, holding their commission from Christ himself, devoting their whole life to ameliorating the condition of their fellow men, standing up in the congregation to declare the mind of Jehovah, and even revered for their sacred calling, are tempted to stand aloof, to fancy themselves different from other men, to merge the office in the man and not the man in the office, to listen to the voice of their fellow man. And thus they tempt the Lord their God, listening to the voice of the creature.

In the third form of the temptation Jesus is taken up into an exceeding high mountain, and is shown all the kingdoms of the world. He came to do the will of the Father, to manifest him in the fulness of his love. It is the truest, the noblest, the highest wisdom. He, then, who serves his God is on the highest ground. But with the world the top of the highest mountain, the summit of human ambition, is the pride of life. It is the intellect of

man in its full development ; *before which is laid all the kingdoms of science.*

This is offered to Christ. Knowledge is power. Before it all men prostrate themselves. It is offered in a moment of time. Transcendent knowledge shall be thine, all will bow down to it, only let the creature be supreme on the throne. The reply is, It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

How deceptive is sin—the knowledge of good and evil ! Satan begets children after his own likeness. He, in order to counterfeit the true, presents, as a distinguishing feature, a voluntary humility. Now he would put forth the human intellect, *in the pride of life*, as man's only good, supplanting the Spirit of life.

The intellect is now being fully developed ; all sciences are now being laid open before it. These are the kingdoms of the world : the glory of which is the knowledge of them—scientific knowledge. To possess it is laudable enough. Of itself it is good. It is the gift of God. Man possessed it originally, for he then gave names to all things animate and inanimate. All creature life was brought before Adam, who knew their properties and qualities, that it might be seen what he would call them. He gave them their names—their generic names, doubtless—and whatsoever he called every living creature, that was the name thereof. It is said by a distinguished writer, “Astronomy is the highest glory of the human intellect.”—*Holland*. The endeavour to recover this lost power may explain the puny efforts of gigantic minds ; whereas the highest attribute, the distinguishing glory of the human intellect, is to subserve it to the life of God within, to the glory of the Father. Otherwise, it may attain even to the knowledge of the things of a man, *yet be separate from Christ*. “What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him ? even so the things of God knoweth *no man*, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God ; that we might know the things—the deep things of God—which are freely given to us of God.” (1 Cor. ii. 11, 12.) How subtle, how tremendous, then, was the temptation to him whose delight was ever with the sons of men ! But he listened to the voice of God, and rejected the evil. He put the created nature in its proper place, and obeyed

the higher, being led of the Spirit. Thus saith Jehovah, Let not the wise glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty glory in his might, let not the rich glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I, Jehovah, exerciseth loving-kindness, *judgment, and righteousness*, in the earth: for it is *in these things* I delight, saith Jehovah. (Jer. ix. 23, 24.)

But what is the fact? all that is holy and righteous is subordinated to the one thing that engrosses the minds of men.

The temptation of Christ was not in the grosser forms of carnality, but in those higher types which are inclusive of all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Now God, in his paternal character, has ever sought to bring back man to himself. In all his perfect providence he has been teaching, educating the world. But, what he has been doing in creation, providence, and grace, has been perverted in the exalting of the creature instead of the Father, the source of all good.

The principle of sin is in a knowledge of good and evil—subjecting all to the growth and development of the colossal man.

It is said, “the successive generations are days in this man’s life, the discoveries and inventions which characterise the different epochs of the world’s history are his works; the creeds and doctrines, the opinions and principles of successive ages, are his thoughts; the state of society at different times are his manners; he grows in knowledge, in self-control, in visible size, just as we do. And his education is, in the same way and for the same reason, precisely similar to ours. What may thus be said of the race as a whole analogically, may be said of the individual who possesses in himself all that is in the world.”—*Bishop Temple*. His faculties may indeed enlarge, his cultivation progress, and his powers be developed, acquiring vast accumulations and stores of knowledge, and yet possess only what is in the world. He has shown himself prominently on three stages of his existence. “In his early life he ate, he drank, he married, he gave in marriage. In the prime of manhood he promoted virtuous actions, and discharged the amenities and duties of social life. In mature and ripe old age he attained the summit of all earthly desires, intellectual greatness.” But is this Christ, or Antichrist?

Evil is indeed catholic. Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus est catholicum. We have seen how, from the beginning, three forms have gradually developed themselves. And now Mohammedanism, Romanism, and Intellectualism, as tangible types, cover the whole civilized world. For in each and every man these powers exist in a refined sensuality, religious spiritualism, and intellectual power. So that the world as one man, in all his full strength, *the colossal man*, is now standing forth, whom Christ will destroy at his coming.

With all our speculations and beliefs, we cannot mistake the striking features of the colossal man. There is abundance of moral sentiment, a highly cultivated reason and taste, a negative holiness in the renunciation of some of the gross and offensive habits of the flesh, a truthful apprehension of the moulding influences of the several relations of life, which are now losing their power, and an experimental knowledge of what is generally considered to be holy, beautiful, and lawful; but the two unchanging principles of the kingdom of God are ignored, and so the Dagon of this world is set up. Knowledge that puffeth up, the pride of life, the glory of the kingdoms of the world, the culminating of Satanic power, sits in the house of God, and is worshipped as God. It is the man of sin.

It is true, a mystic materialism is crushing the sensibilities of the soul, and deadening all sense of invisible and spiritual things. It is a mournful confession when men say in the light of these things, We find it hard to say what is the change that is taking place, or where we are hurrying. Calmly and almost happily, without enthusiasm, without much fear, and even without much curiosity, we wait our coming fortunes. For the first time, probably, in the history of the world, men are consciously entering upon a great epoch of change, and yet scarcely rouse themselves to wonder what this change will be. Again, "the number of thinkers is so great (?), ideas are disseminated with such rapidity that the enlightenment of nations advances in an ever increasing proportion." We ask, then, in this period of the world's maturity in age and judgment, when the fire of its youth is toned down and sobered, and permanent determinations are the result of its experience, how comes it that, with all this scientific research, growth of intellectual power, and accumulations of experience,

there is abroad such a fearful spirit of unrest? Is it not that an inward monitor intimates how that we are building on the sandy foundation of human nature, and not on the Rock of the covenant of God?

To the civilized and cultivated Corinthians, Paul said, Christ sent me to preach the Gospel, not with the wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made *of none effect*. Whatever ministered to the gratification of the carnal mind, be it fluency of speech, elegant diction, precision of language, exact composition, or the speculations of philosophy, he repudiated.

The principles of the kingdom are ever the same. They destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nought the understanding of the prudent.

In the Apocalypse—a revelation of things that must shortly come to pass—there is a gathering up of the symbolic teaching of Scripture. Throughout, it is the kingdom of Christ in antagonism to the world. Therein is written, “Here is wisdom, let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666.” Seven is the number of the covenant—Three of the Trinity: Four of all flesh. The 3 and 4 are integral parts of 7. We have not space to give even a running paraphrase of the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters of Revelation, but it is evident that the number 666 is three sixes. These express the three forms of human development. They are not of the seven, being short of it. So they are short of the covenant, and have no part in it. So men come short of the glory of God. However in the eyes of the world they may approximate to it, they are in nowise of it; and so are in hostility to it. They who have the seven, have their names written in the Lamb’s book of life; while they who possess the sixes, have the mark of the beast, and are in antagonism to Christ. Let the earnest and continual desire be, Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

11. The devil leaveth him; and angels now minister unto him. The contrast is very striking. We see it and we know it. Are we, then, to part with this precious spiritual truth, so full of consolation? Are we to come down from the great realities revealed in the temptation? Are we here to resolve the ministry of

angels to a supply of food to satisfy the Lord's hunger, when every word is pregnant with spiritual import?

The great enemy of God and man is vanquished—the cross is a reality. What, then, should be the Lord's experience? What the believer's?—of him who, thus triumphing, proves that he is superior to all that is in the world, but that he realises the kingdom of the heavens. He then learns how truly it is at hand. He makes it manifest in the overthrow of the enemy, and angels minister to him. His soul is refreshed from the presence of the Lord. He tastes of the grapes of Eshcol as an earnest of his inheritance.

We have already remarked upon the relation between the Baptist and Jesus; and the meaning of the Lord's baptism as expressive of the truths, of holiness and righteousness, which he possessed; how he was then led by the indwelling Spirit, even as we are, to be tempted of the devil. Thus, are we tempted not only to know what is in our hearts, but that we may overcome as Christ overcame. Now angels minister to him. They minister to us. But they do not minister to us till after the temptation. We stand against the devil in no other power than that of God. Angels do not assist us against the fallen ones. If the creature could overcome sin, then Christ died in vain. The battle is Jehovah's. Against him does sin lift its banner. The Lord himself undertakes for us. No angels, no saints, no holy ones, no discipline of the body, no cultivation of the mind, will avail. We must stand equipped in the panoply of God. Then are we sons of God, heirs of salvation, and angels are our ministering spirits. And blessed are they that keep judgment *at all times*, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates of the city.

The term angel is often used with the name of Jehovah or Elohim: signifying the angel of the Lord, or the angel of God. In other places the epithet "holy" is added, because they are the representatives of holiness. As such, they must be antagonistic to all evil. What their nature may be is of little moment. They are, using a negative term, immaterial. We know less of angels as distinct from their office. Their ministry has a practical bearing on our experience, and conduces to our knowledge of the truth. They signify the nearness of the kingdom, and the condition of holiness indispensable to realise it.

To men in general the existence of angels is of little moment ; but to the believer it is important. It is written, *Ye are* come unto Mount Zion and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels. If, then, we have put on Christ, these things are a reality—we see, we enter the kingdom, and find how truly it is not meet and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost.

No words could more forcibly attest the kingdom being at hand. Such did the vision of angels to Jacob, when he had given up the flesh, and was now a pilgrim on the earth. And we realise the kingdom, when we fight the good fight—agonise the good agony of faith.

Men come under temptation and they fail, because they put off the armour of God. And when they fail they do not, like David, cry from the bottom of the pit, and seek with their whole heart to be placed on the Rock and led by the Spirit.

Thus far have we contemplated Christ as the Nazarene. Christianity is no abstract thing. But being regarded as such, it is made the fruitful source of all the heartburnings and contentions of Christendom. All the divisions of high and low, of broad and narrow church, as of all sectaries, are the outcoming of the uncircumcised heart, the uncrucified nature. The truth is one, and we can do nothing against it. It stands despite of Mohammedanism, Romanism, Rationalism. It levels all. No man can be led by the Spirit until he has previously put off the flesh in Christ. Baptism attests it. Temptation proves it. Christ witnessed to it, and the experience of the believer confirms it.

Christ must be followed in the completeness of the truth, as taught in his baptism and revealed in his life. Then shall we possess our souls in our patience. He tells us, for our comfort, that he has overcome the world, and it is only our faith—that is, putting on Christ and living him—that overcomes as he overcame, and then, with God, all things are possible. We rest in him, and in no arm of flesh.

All the accidents, distressing circumstances, unexpected calamities, overwhelming misfortunes of life, witness to the evil one. He has sought continually the destruction of man's higher nature, and has planted in us to this end the seed-principle of all evil, of which the lower nature ever bears witness. We have already

considered the difficulty which perplexes the minds of most—Why this world was created subject to so much wretchedness—a question the Apostle Paul incidentally answers, where he says, The whole creation was subject to vanity in hope. This every man experiences in himself, and, like all nature, he does his utmost to throw it off. It is a yoke of bondage, and clearly and distinctly contrasts with the liberty of the children of God. Then, when we are children of the covenant, all these things work together for good. They work, even, as in parturition, life is forced into being—so, to the manifestation of our sonship. (Heb. vi. 7.)

12. The Baptist is cast into prison. His work is done. His ministry has ceased. Having respect to the kingdom, his outward circumstances attest the reality to which his life witnessed—that he was dead to the world. On the other hand—having respect to the world—he is hated and persecuted by it. It is fitting, then, that his imprisonment should here be mentioned, as following the temptation. It shows that where Satan is *foiled* there he persecutes unto death. This verse, then, stands in the closest connexion with what precedes it. And we again remark that our Evangelist does not trouble himself with chronological order; or the mere succession of events. The great reality with him is the kingdom of the heavens. And he selects such incidents in the life of Jesus as best illustrate it. Then not to make his ground his stand-point is not only to narrow his writings, but to miss the great spiritual verities they reveal.

The Lord Jesus now comes forth, a minister to the circumcision for the truth of God. Had they obeyed the truth the Baptist taught, they would have been the true circumcision; for they would have received him, in whom alone they had the circumcision without hands, and *in him* the confirmation of the promise made unto the fathers. In them, he would have truly ministered to them of the Spirit of promise. For *in him* all the promises of God were, Yea and amen, to the Glory of God the Father.

He is the true minister—the true type of all who would minister the things of God. They must know Christ—know him by his personal indwelling—know him, in the power of his redemption, in a separation from sin, and by his Spirit consecrated to God. If they have not entered their ministerial office by this door, how can they testify of the kingdom; but are, from the nature of

things, being without the true circumcision, only thieves and robbers.

Jesus hearing what they had done to the Baptist, goes forth into Galilee, publicly, into the country of Herod. Has Satan power to afflict the faithful servants of God? Do we see him oppressing them, and apparently rendering all their efforts abortive? Apparently it is so. But the world is the Lord's, and we occupy it in the name of Jehovah and his Christ. Christ does not give up the world to him whom he came to destroy, though evil and darkness reign there; for he came not to destroy but to save the world.

13. It was fitting that he should at once enter the stronghold of Satan—the land of darkness and death. He left Nazareth, and came and dwelt at Capernaum—a centre from which the truth might be made known throughout Galilee.

From its situation, Capernaum offered facilities for commercial enterprise. It was populous, wealthy, and influential, having communication with all parts of the region round about. In its prosperity it was lifted up, not only in a vain estimate of its own importance, but, after the manner of other nations, it sought enchantments and familiar spirits. The people were utterly degraded; they, indeed, sat in darkness in the region of the shadow of death.

Here the ministry of Jesus began. The Sun of Righteousness rose with healing on his wings. Great light was now here. It shone; but did the dark cloud depart? or, in the words of John, did the darkness comprehend it—take it down into itself?

Matthew now refers to the same prophecy to which he called our attention in respect to the birth of Jesus. (Is. vii.—ix.) Here, it would not be necessary to notice the puerile remarks on the sacred text put forth as an interpretation of it, but for the great mischief it causes. It fosters a line of thought out of which men cannot move. Prejudice is a fearful stumbling-block. After the ablest criticism has exhausted itself upon the literal meaning of Scripture, and it is so worded as to entirely engross the mind, the heavenly treasure—the revelation—the sum and substance of it, is not approached. The human mind, in its conceit, takes its course, and these things are hid from it.

Matthew, in referring to this prophecy, intimates what the

Lord's teaching was, what was the burden of his preaching, as he went throughout the land of darkness and of death. If we know the covenant, we start with the inspired penman, and we know what to look for. Failing here, we only guess at truth.

It is a great error to set forth Christ apart from the human race, when what is predicated of him should be also of it: We thus judge, if one died for all, then all died—died to sin, whereby sin is dead (Rom. vii. 8, 9); and he died for all, that they who live should henceforth not live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again. (2 Cor. v. 14, 15.) If ye be risen *with Christ*, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. (Col. iii. 1—3.)

The Lord Jesus, beginning his ministry, doubtless dwelt upon the truth of this prophecy. We know what was the Baptist's preaching. The Lord's practice was to enter the synagogue, read, and address the people. (Luke iv. 21, 22.) Then, where is there a subject so full of truth, corresponding to his time, as this to which our attention is now directed.

There are two kings, the heads of Samaria and Damascus, representing Jew and Gentile; and there is a confederacy against the house of David. It is the whole world, though redeemed, confederate with sin against the true David and his Son.

Isaiah says, I and the children whom Jehovah hath given me are for signs and for wonders—events that shall carry conviction concerning what the signs teach. In the three names Maher-shalal-hash-baz, Shear-jashub, and Immanuel, as we have already seen (chap. i. 23) the covenant is revealed.

In the first, "Hasten the prey," the full measure of your iniquity, *and for which the waters of Shiloah run softly*. But they refused them, they refused the Holy One (John ix. 11), and so continued under the power of evil. Jehovah hisses to the fly of Egypt, the prince of this world, Satan, whom Matthew calls Beelzebub, lord of the fly (x. 25). He delivers them up to Satan, *into* the destruction of the flesh, in the judgment of God, and so "a speeding of the spoil." When men close their eyes against the *goodness* of God and their own condition, they are permitted to wax worse and worse, that their eyes may be opened as judgment after judgment comes, "after the manner of Egypt." Then when the judgments of God are in the world, the people

learn righteousness. Wherefore there is a call to the bee of Assyria, because of his order and government. Bee is derived from **נָבֵר** to lead, to govern. All which is fulfilled in Christ, who not only became sin, but who, as King, revealed himself to the destruction of all the confederacies of evil. All this must take place before "the remnant shall return," according to the second name, Shear-jashub. The remnant survive the judgment and return to the land, the inheritance, the mighty God. The remnant, then, implies *judgment*—redemption. To return is to partake of *righteousness*, according to Immanuel, whose kingdom is established with judgment and righteousness henceforth and for ever.

They, then, who reject the waters of Shiloah, and prefer the covenant of evil, come under the judgment of God, and have no inheritance among them that are sanctified; while they who in judgment wash in Shiloah (John ix. 39) are a remnant, one with Immanuel. For, like him, must every one that is left in the land eat butter and honey. It is Immanuel's land, for God is in the midst. But why must they eat these things? The vine planted is rooted up. It yields not its fruit of judgment and righteousness, with which the kingdom of David is established. Thorns and briars take its place. (Is. v. 6, 7: Heb. vi. 6, 7.) Such is the state of the people; while it may be said of Judah, it has not yet departed from the Lord. (Hosea xi. 12.) The fly and the bee rest upon all desolate places, desolate in the truest sense, without God. Here, then, is the judgment of God, and the produce of the bee is honey. They, then, *who remain in the land*, must testify to judgment delivering them from evil, by removing it far off. Then the butter is, because, the mattock having destroyed the thorns and briars, the land brings forth *its increase* in abundance of milk. Thus, as the fruit of the vine was judgment and righteousness, so now Immanuel's kingdom is established, and as every one is to eat of *honey and butter*, the same is required of them. That these visible truths reveal invisible is evident from Is. ix. 5, 6.

17. From that time Jesus began to preach his own kingdom—how truly it was at hand, and how it demanded from every one the great principles of the covenant with which it was established. He said, I can of mine own self do nothing. He put off the nature he had taken, and walked in the Spirit of the Father. Christ is

our Exemplar, not that we try in the flesh to do the things he did, but we, possessing him, and so being led by the Spirit, *are as he was*.

18. Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Peter and Andrew. They, doubtless, had seen him before. They were now at their daily occupation, and, perhaps, talking over the things that they had heard. How often does the still small voice within thus call us to repentance. And oftentimes such a testimony is borne, not by the learned, as by the ignorant, and them that are out of the way, as Simon, a sturdy mariner, who cursed and swore. Here the Lord Jesus *visibly* called them to follow him. They straightway left *their nets*, their all. He now sees other two brethren, in a ship with their father, mending their nets. They also recognise him, and he calls them. They immediately left the ship and *their father* and followed him.

Nothing can be more expressive than the short, simple, yet graphic account of the call of these fishermen. Repentance necessitates a change of mind—the giving up of the world and all that is in it: “Old things pass away; behold, all things become new.”

Four men, and only four, are mentioned. By them Matthew would intimate *the universality* of the call;—that the command is to all men, “Repent.” Christ has died for all. His Spirit is poured out upon all; and the command therefore is, “Baptize all.”

By these four men we see the purpose of God revealed, even as we have already seen it by the four women in the genealogy. The universal tendency of the truth must never be lost sight of. To be perfect in Christ Jesus is, according to the covenant of a Triune God, for all men; for the truth calls all men.

As four, they are a guarantee to all men. As two pairs, they attest the two principles of the covenant—a sitting loose in Christ to all that is of the world, for in him they are crucified to the world, and the world to them, and a giving up of all the relationships of this life for higher and holier.

As brethren, as two pairs of brethren, and as four men, they attest the one Father, whom *all men* should honour in the *two* and eternal principles of the covenant.

They, in their outward obedience, *visibly* attest the covenant of

God. We thus learn, through their call, what is ours, and what should be our obedience *spiritually*. This spiritual experience they have not yet. However, in their call, and in their departure, they are like the children of Isaiah for signs and wonders.

The covenant is, "The elder shall serve the younger;" but since Satan has rebelled, and inverted creation's law, the covenant is fully revealed, and calls all men to obey it in the power of God, as seen outwardly in the fishermen, as they give up this life and its cherished relationships, and enter upon truer and holier ones. As we follow them to the end, we see them revealing the covenant, and bringing out distinct truths. Of the first pair—Peter and Andrew—we hear nothing of the elder after the descent of the Holy Ghost. Of the other—James and John—we hear only so much of the former as more distinctly conveys the same idea intended by the obscurity of Andrew. James, the first-born, dies, and John, the younger, lives. Again, of the survivors, Peter and John, we learn the same truth; the elder is bound even as the Lord showed him, and he is carried he knows not whither. He dies, and the younger lives, and more than any attests the operating principle of the Spirit of life, even love. Thus these men, in the providence of God, outwardly and visibly bore witness to the great principle revealed in Christ crucified, at the same time respect is had to the other in the Son of God. The first pair, by leaving their all—their means of subsistence, so to speak, renounced this life. The other, leaving their father with the hired servants, parted with all the ties of life—as the Lord says, If a man come to me and hate not father and mother, wife and children, brethren and sisters, yea, his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

In the call of these four men, and their obedience to the doctrine of Christ crucified, apart from all speculative beliefs, we have clearly before us how a man is accepted with God.

23. All maladies and sicknesses are incipient death—the result of sin; the echo in the body of the sad reality in the soul. The gospel of the kingdom, is the overthrow of all evil, and the restoring of the soul to the enjoyment and manifestation of all that the Paternity of God involves. It is a fact. It is the covenant, therefore does the Lord heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people.

In the call and obedience of the fishermen, we perceive how that men are, by virtue of Christ's work, free agents. This is taught in the parable of the prodigal son, who, by virtue of the work of Christ and the Spirit in saving and seeking the lost, arises and goes to the Father, which is repentance. Then, while these forms of sickness and infirmity show us sin in its power disabling us, of which the sufferers are truly conscious, the removing of them, and so the restoring to a healthy life, teaches that, through the grace of God, which has ever preceded man, we, coming unto him, follow him. The Gospel reveals this. It reveals Christ crucified in us. So, then, we are enabled to leave all and to follow him.

His fame went throughout all Syria. He preached the Gospel, and, in doing so, had no respect of persons. Dwellers in Syria, as in Palestine, were brought. According to the prophecy (Is. vii.—ix.), Jew and Gentile were healed. Every man in his suffering had therein the strongest possible claim to his sympathy and consideration. Moreover, it was to the honour and glory of God that evil should be banished. None ever came to him and was confounded. No degradation, no thralldom, can be any argument to keep us from Christ. The word he preached revealed facts accomplished—*invisible realities*, in which all men have a common interest. He came and destroyed the works of the devil, that we might renounce all and follow him ; and so, being led by the Spirit, resist the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Matthew simply states that the Lord healed them. He did this, not as independent of the truth, but *as signs* of the kingdom which was at hand.

In making here a few remarks upon the nature of miracles, let us have a clear idea of the truth. The Lord has revealed the principles of the kingdom. They are of universal obligation, as set forth by the four fishermen. The distinct and prominent truth they reveal in relation to the Sermon on the Mount, is their forsaking all—which forsaking by all men is confirmed by the signs or miracles of healing. All are healed. Else, what is the Gospel? What is the meaning of being reconciled to God? No man can effect this healing, but is personally to make effective what is already done for all. That the Lord has healed all

spiritually, is attested by the fact that he healed, of their bodily sicknesses and infirmities, whomsoever was brought to him—even great multitudes of people from all parts. The importance of this truth is seen in its relation to the Sermon on the Mount.

A miracle is not merely an attestation or divine sanction to certain doctrines, but rather the expression of what is invisible. Although it might be wrought through the intervention of an angel, it would not then be a revealing of his own power, but the kingdom revealing itself.

Without entering into the arguments of objectors to miracles, we would simply observe, they are not contrary to nature. For if they be outward signs of a kingdom of righteousness—a kingdom that is over all, which they attest—how can they be otherwise than most natural? Deformity, sickness, death, bear the impress of sin. Yea, everything not subordinated to the spiritual nature and best interests of man, is abnormal, and contrary to creation's law.

Much is advanced to show that a miracle is given to impress the mind that a power is being exercised contrary to a natural anticipation. What is the ground here taken? If we stand in the kingdom, and from this stand-point contemplate the will and purpose of the great King as ever going forth against all that gives the lie, what should be the natural anticipation? But that all adverse power would be overthrown, and of this the miracle would be the attestation. To regard it as contrary to anticipation, is to deny the kingdom. It is, then, no argument that they are contrary to experience. Men love the lie, and the truth is contrary to their experience; whereas, to obey the truth necessitates a far greater prodigy than any offered to the senses of men. Nor can we conceive how a miracle can be wrought to serve a temporary purpose. The purpose of God is the revelation of his kingdom, destroying every yoke. A miracle, by its physical phenomena and temporary relief, would indeed afford some expressive sign of the truth. The casting out devils was not only a type—a pledge of a power that was ever ready to overthrow the works of the devil—but was an outward expression of what was already done.

. But these outward signs would never convince men. If they would not believe the word, they would not the works of Christ.

The mystery of the word is given to those who will receive it ; while to those whose ears are dull of hearing, and whose hearts are waxed gross, parables are given ; for the truths of nature are outward witnesses of invisible realities, so they are without excuse.

All that science will ever discover of the laws and principles of the material universe, will be only a mute attestation to the kingdom. And there is nothing that will afford so firm a basis for the vast fabric of scientific knowledge itself, as an experience in the invisible things of the kingdom. According to these, divine volition and physical effects are to be interpreted. And it might be shown, from physical laws, that miracles were not incredible, nor incapable of proof—not improbable, nor impossible ; yet we should be no nearer understanding them than if they were objected to altogether.

The believer should require no metaphysical argument to refute the objector. The wisdom of God is not dependent on human learning to maintain the truth of miracles. Too often the elaborate essays to explain a miracle evidence how truly men are groping in the dark.

The miracles of Christ were signs : sometimes they are called powers, because of the going forth of power ; or wonders, from the effect upon the astonished multitudes.

The Lord's simple reply, " If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you," was not a mere logical confutation of his adversaries, but a testimony to the truth—that his miracles were not for the overturning of the kingdom of evil, but that it was overturned. The kingdom of the heavens being at hand, the casting out of devils would be an outward sign of the reality, which extended to all men, for all were redeemed.

Whatever of the supernatural may be in this case, it would be the same with other miracles ; for they derive what claim they have to that character, from their relation to the invisible truths themselves, of which they are the corresponding signs.

Pharaoh, like Herod, was wrong in asking a miracle. If revelation presupposes a power *in man* of recognising the truth, as it is found in the Word of God, then he had no right to demand a sign. For if the Word be not received, the sign cannot. If man

will not receive the former, which is the revelation of spiritual realities, how can he receive the latter, being the expression of them. It is God's order—one according to the nature of things. If the signs influence us at all, they send us back to the Word and to the testimony.

Miracles wrought by evil agency were permitted by God, but under his control, and so as to attest the kingdom. It is, indeed, wonderful how education and prepossessions warp the judgment and blind the perceptions. Surely the true explanation of miracles may be found in the Lord's reply to Nicodemus. In the concluding remarks of a learned essay, there is this citation from a distinguished author:—"That no wise and considerate man will suffer either wit, or ridicule, or sophistry, to rob him of this anchor of his faith (that is, in miracles), but he will turn to his Saviour, with the confidence so emphatically expressed by Nicodemus: Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God. FOR NO man can do these miracles which thou doest except God be with him." With all his confidence, Nicodemus was wrong. He was yet outside the kingdom, therefore he could judge only according to his senses. The Lord emphatically told him, not only that he had not seen, had not entered the kingdom, though he was a teacher in Israel, but, that he could not without the condition necessary. The Lord reproved him because *he received not his testimony*, as he testified what he knew and what he had seen. Men do evil or they do good—that is, evil or good works in them. He, then, that doeth truth, is crucified to the evil and the evil to him. So, he cometh to the light—he cometh into the kingdom, that he may make manifest that his works are wrought not in "man and God with him," but in God and man crucified. Thus, the Lord taught that miracles are signs of the kingdom established, of the light, and of him by whom they are done—how that it was God in him so working. This is nature in its truest form; as the Lord elsewhere says, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground *and die*, it abideth *alone*; but if *it die*, it bringeth forth much fruit. So is it with man; there must be a death of the old seed ere the new life can spring forth, and it is a witness to the breaking up of the house of bondage.

It is said, John did no miracle. Why was it so? His official character had respect to the world. His life, teaching, baptism,

and relation to the Lord Jesus, as his forerunner, were one sign, that of Jonas; as Jonas lay three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so did John attest that he was not of this world, being dead and buried to it.

We are taught in the Old Testament how that all creation is a visible and outward expression of the kingdom of the heavens. The heavens declare the glory of God. (Ps. xix. 1.) What is the glory of God but the covenant ordered in all things. It is the outcoming of Jehovah blessing his creatures with all his fullness. All which the heavens express. In them is a tabernacle for the sun, who goeth forth as a bridegroom. In the material temple was the *Shekinah*, the glory of God between the cherubim. A truer temple was the Lord's body, and we behold his glory, says John, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Thus the sun witnesses to him who is the light of the world—the Sun of Righteousness, the bridegroom of his Church, whose going forth is as the radiance of light beaming forth his blessings and filling the earth with his glory. And the moon, a faithful witness receiving this light, cannot be hid, but shines forth in the midst of surrounding darkness, even *as the invisible Church of God*, in giving forth her light, bears her testimony to a dark and benighted world. Likewise the stars. The moon represents the Church in her corporate capacity; the stars individual believers, and denote their relation to the source of light. The heavens thus declare the glory of God.

After the ordinary manifestations of the glory of God, we would now briefly refer to the extraordinary—the miracles of the Old Testament, and show how they incidentally testify to the two great principles to which all others witness. It is most truly observed, that the miracles of the Old Testament are chiefly grouped around two great epochs in the history of the theocratic kingdom—the foundation under Moses and Joshua, and the restoration by Elijah and Elisha. The relation in which these men stood respectively to each other, is somewhat similar to that of the four fishermen. The relation of the law and the prophets was subordinate to a more comprehensive one—the old and new dispensation. Both testifying to the same principles of the Theocracy. But it is to these inner principles set forth by these

relations we again call attention. Moses dies; Joshua lives and enters the promised land, taking all Israel with him—making his enemies his footstool, as he put his feet upon the necks of their kings, and divides the inheritance. So of Elijah and Elisha. There is much in the life of the former to show the relation in which the prophets stood to the law. Yet subordinate to the inner and greater truth—the spiritual. Elijah and the Baptist were in the same category. Elijah made a terrible slaughter upon the enemies of the Lord—he spared not one; when Elisha went forth with a double portion of his Spirit, attesting life and separation from the world and all earthly relationships.

CHAPTER V.

- 1 AND seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain : and when he
2 was set, his disciples came unto him : and he opened his mouth, and taught
them, saying,
- 3 Blessed *are* the poor in spirit : for their's is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed
4 *are* they that mourn : for they shall be comforted. Blessed *are* the meek :
6 for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed *are* they which do hunger and
7 thirst after righteousness : for they shall be filled. Blessed *are* the merciful :
8 for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed *are* the pure in heart : for they shall
9 see God. Blessed *are* the peacemakers : for they shall be called the children
10 of God. Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake : for
11 their's is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you,
and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for
12 my sake : rejoice, and be exceeding glad : for great *is* your reward in heaven :
for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.
- 13 Ye are the salt of the earth : but if the salt have lost his savour, where-
with shall it be salted ? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out,
14 and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A
15 city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle,
and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick ; and it giveth light unto
16 all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they
may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.
- 17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets : I am
18 not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven
and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till
19 all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least com-
mandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the
kingdom of heaven : but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall
20 be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That
except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and
Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.
- 21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill ;
22 and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment : but I say unto
you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in
danger of the judgment : and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca,
shall be in danger of the council : but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall

23 be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and
24 there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee ; leave there
thy gift before the altar, and go thy way ; first be reconciled to thy brother,
and then come and offer thy gift.

25 Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him ;
lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge
26 deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto
thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the utter-
most farthing.

27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not com-
28 mit adultery : but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to
29 lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And
if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee : for it is
profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy
30 whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee,
cut it off, and cast it from thee : for it is profitable for thee that one of thy
members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into
hell.

31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a
32 writing of divorcement : but I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away
his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery :
and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

33 Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt
not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths : but I say
34 unto you, Swear not at all ; neither by heaven ; for it is God's throne : nor by
35 the earth ; for it is his footstool : neither by Jerusalem ; for it is the city of
36 the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst
37 not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea,
yea ; Nay, nay : for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

38 Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for
39 a tooth : but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil : but whosoever shall
40 smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man
will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have *thy* cloak also.
41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to
42 him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not
thou away.

43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and
44 hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that
curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despite-
45 fully use you, and persecute you ; that ye may be the children of your
Father which is in heaven : for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on
46 the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love
them which love you, what reward have ye ? do not even the publicans the
47 same ? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others* ?
48 do not even the publicans so ? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father
which is in heaven is perfect.

WE now enter upon the consideration of one of the most precious portions of the Word of God—a sermon on *righteousness*, and one of the richest treasures we possess. Herein we contemplate the operation of a *holy love*, the law of the Spirit, the fruit of a good tree, which must come forth. He who knows the Lord will find that his Christian life and practice are the fruit of righteousness, which is here set forth as in a mirror, wherein are reflected the features of his *true life*, even the lineaments of Christ, the Son of God.

We may truly say that no passage has suffered more by the arbitrary division into chapters than it. This sermon stands in the closest possible connexion with the miracles that close the last chapter. The healing by Christ was, in the power of the cross, the removal of all that was contrary to the Father. Now, we enter upon those truths which reveal him, and constitute the blessedness of men.

Whether this discourse was delivered as a whole, at one time, or is a collection of fragmentary sayings, is of little moment. The Evangelist brings together such sayings, events, incidents in the life of Jesus, as best serve the purpose, scope, or design of his writings. We do not here seek an identity as to time and place in the account given by Luke. The statements contained in this discourse may have been oft delivered in the different cities through which the Lord passed; and, again, may have constituted only this one discourse. Since they are for all men, in all time, they are in one and another form repeated as the only truths meeting their necessities. Harmonists have done much to impede the simple interpretation of the Gospel. They have looked for a harmony elsewhere than in the order and consistency of each writer's own mind, in the eternal verities to which they severally testify.

If we attempt to bring in from a parallel passage any of the details given by one Evangelist in order to supply an imaginary omission in another, we fail, and forsake the true line of interpretation. Here may be succinct and condensed forms of the Lord's discourses: texts upon which he enlarged at different times. Or, he may have anticipated the mind of his servant moved by the Holy Ghost to write the Gospel, and, in the order here observable, have shown how one truth was related to another, even the

connexion which runs throughout the whole, and upon which he may have particularly dwelt. Had the Lord taken the several and different topics in the sermon, and at one time commented upon them, his hearers could not have borne it. But if he gave them, as weighty sayings, to be remembered, with such suggestions as to enable them to trace the spiritual connexion, then he gave them the most powerful key of interpretation, whereby they would understand some of the most precious sayings that ever came forth from the lips of the blessed Redeemer of mankind.

We have already noticed the connexion between the realities here set forth and the preceding truths—a connexion so true that the practical life of a Christian attests it, even as the essential principles of the Gospel demand it.

Jesus, beholding the multitudes, went up into a mountain : and when he was set, his disciples came unto him. Matthew does not state anything respecting the multitudes, whether they followed Jesus into the mountain, or not. Nor does he distinguish between the disciples and the multitudes in any other way than that the former came unto him. Then, were they identical ? If not, who were the disciples ? Were they the four fishermen ? These only had been distinguished from the rest. The fishermen had left all, and followed him. The multitudes had left their cities, and followed him. If there were anything disabling them, he healed them. We then would place the multitudes, by virtue of the truth, and the healing of Christ, in the same category with the disciples, and for the nonce, call them all disciples. We must understand them as such, at least, outwardly. So were the fishermen. Having left all, they now learn of him. Coming to Christ, they approach the threshold of the kingdom. Partaking of Christ, they enter this one door. It is the one condition everywhere enforced for developing the spiritual life in man. The truth is no respecter of persons. It is, then, for multitudes, be they Syrians, or Jews, Scythians, barbarians, bond or free. They, who profess Christianity, must bear the cross—must practically know the death of Christ, in a continual dying to self, the world, and sin, before they can have any practical knowledge of the risen life of the Lord.

If we understand these things, and be not warped nor blinded by prejudices, or predilections, we shall see that there is, in

addressing these multitudes, no abrupt beginning on the part of the Lord.

There are but seven beatitudes as the positive effects of Christian life ; and, like the seven prismatic colours of the bow—the sign of the covenant made with all flesh—they are the outcoming, *the manifestation of the one Spirit in his sevenfold gifts, witnessing how truly they, who thus demonstrate his indwelling presence, are the children of light.* These seven beatitudes testify to the Christian in his relation to the kingdom ; while the eighth, in his relation to the world, which must persecute—thereby showing how all things work together for good. Here is the only standard of life before God ; and we must set ourselves to the attainment of it, without any modification of the truth, or mental reservation whatever. The infirmities of human nature are frequently urged in extenuation of the consequences of disobedience, but such moralists are ignorant of the nature and character of God's kingdom and his righteousness.

The infirmities of human nature, so often pleaded, rob us of our blessings, and take from us all that constitutes our strength in Christ, in whom there is a complete renunciation of the flesh, that the sevenfold Spirit may dwell and abide in us.

The Lord Jesus, who, as our Exemplar, knew not only what was in man, but also the gift of God, and the Christian's experience, does not place before us an imperfect standard. And he who knows what it is to be crucified with Christ, and led by the Spirit, will attest the truth of his teaching. We must make God's ground and not man's.

3. Blessed are the poor in spirit : for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.

These dwell in the Spirit of God who dwells in them. Well : is not this all that can be desired ? True : yet it is important to observe the order, the condition—poor in spirit.

This is no outward or voluntary poverty. Nor is it an inward sense of emptiness, as of utter helplessness and want, even in respect to our souls. While it necessarily involves a knowledge of the true value of created things, and the tendency and proneness of our depraved nature to them, it is the experience of those who are crucified to the world, and the world to them. They, through the Son of David, have put off all that is visible, earthly,

sensual; then theirs is the kingdom of the heavens; they have in the Spirit both the Father and the Son. Thus, the kingdom of the heavens is a present possession, pregnant with hope—an abundant recompense for all that is given up in this world of error and wrong-doing.

Some of those who used to congregate around the Lord considered themselves blessed. Being the children of Abraham after the flesh, they accounted themselves the children of the blessed One. They said, we are not born of fornication; we have one Father, God. Surely it might be said that their idea of blessedness was the truest, the highest, but it lacked the all-important and essential element, which alone constituted the capacity for the blessing. They knew not what it was to bear the yoke, to carry the cross, *to be poor, to be in Christ*.

The English word, blessed, represents two Hebrew words—**בָּרַךְ** and **אֲשַׁר**. The primary signification of the former is to bend the knee, to kneel down, to kneel down before the Lord—expressive of a condition of soul to receive. Then it came to signify the receiver of a gift, one of permanent felicity, the nature of which is shown in Deut. vii. 14. Of the latter, it is to walk straight on; then to walk *in the way* of righteousness, which is judgment; then to walk with God, to be perfect. Thus, these words convey all that can be said of faith.

In the earlier books of the Old Testament, the former word appears nearly two hundred and fifty times, while the latter is scarcely mentioned. Some writers use both. The Psalmist, using the former word (Ps. cxv. 12, 15), says, The Lord will bless us; he will bless the house of Israel; he will bless the house of Aaron. Ye are blessed of the Lord. Here we have the simple idea of a gift received. In Ps. i. 1, the latter word is used, "O the blessedness of the man," not because he walks not in the way of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but because he has the blessing which the former word signifies; and, then, according to the latter word, goes forth, goes in the straight way, manifesting it, and so avoids the way of the ungodly sinners, and the scornful. So in Ps. xli. 1, 2: "The blessedness of the man that considereth the poor." He is not blessed simply because he considereth the poor, but because, having the bountiful gift, he manifests it, he goes straight on, and therefore he con-

siders the poor. Again, Ps. xxxii. 1: "O the blessedness of him whose transgression is covered—the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit is no guile." This is not because of being pardoned, but because of the gift—the grace bestowed and received, which results in that which is in perfect accordance with the truth.

Again, Mal. iii. 10: Prove me, saith the Lord of hosts, and see whether I will not pour out a blessing:—here is the bountiful gift; and in the twelfth verse the words are changed to express the result—Ye are blessed: for ye shall be called a delightful land. How so? The intermediate verse explains: The fruit of the ground is not destroyed; the vine does not cast her grape. The land thus receiving the blessing—the bountiful gift—gives forth the blessing, so goes straight on. And so the Lord says, It is more blessed to give than to receive. We are indeed blessed in the grace of God received, but it is a greater blessing when we give even as we have received. Freely ye have received, freely give.

This one word "blessed" on the lips of Jesus, then, included the two ideas of receiving and giving, and so conveyed the true idea of a Christian.

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens. Nowhere can there be found a more beautiful commentary upon these words than where Paul says, Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich he became poor, that ye *through his poverty* might be rich. He snatched not at the attributes and perfections of God—they were his, as his co-equal Son; but, being rich he emptied himself of them, and was then in the form of a servant; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself still further, and became obedient unto death, and that the death of the cross. This was his poverty. So we through the same, partaking of it, being crucified with him, are poor that we might be rich—have all the fulness of God in the Spirit, and so have we the kingdom *of the heavens*. See Appendix (A).

4. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. The order in which this beatitude stands is objected to; but it holds its own not only from the nature of things, but also from its relation to that which precedes it.

Who are they that mourn? What is their consolation?

The Lord, addressing the multitudes, would raise them, in revealing the truth, to the appropriation of it. He well knew that if they would possess it, they would in their Christianity experience this beatitude. In the use of these words he, doubtless, referred to Is. lxi., where the prophet predicts what the Lord would say of himself: that he was anointed to preach the Gospel to *the poor*, which would be effective in them, as the prophet expressed in striking contrasts; still, with respect to this beatitude, that he would bind the broken-hearted, set at liberty the captive, open the prison to the bound; he would proclaim the long-suffering mercy of God accepting the true penitent, and speedily executing judgment on evil: that he was anointed to establish those that mourn in Zion. How shall they mourn in Zion? Experience will attest the truth of these words. So long, then, as the believer is here, it will be to him a place of death—a cause of mourning. He feels the utter emptiness and vanity of all things around him—hollow, false, and unreal. All that is in the world he knows is not of the Father. All that is not of the kingdom is in antagonism to it. Of this he is most keenly sensitive. He mourns it. Hence the Apostle could say, Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them in all tribulation, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God; for as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation aboundeth by and through Christ. What, then, were the sufferings of Christ that abounded? Were they to be troubled on every side, perplexed, persecuted, cast down—passing through all manner of perils, meeting with all kinds of disasters? These reached only the flesh. To Paul they were forms of evil; yet, by them, in and through them, he became ever and continually conscious of its presence. Of this he was most sensitive. He saw it, and whether within himself, or without, oppressing his fellow-men, the only escape was the cross of Christ. There were no mawkish sentimentalisms with him about the degradation of our common nature. He knew it was always the same in one and all. Therefore, he would not check the outcoming manifestation of evil “for the sake of human nature,” but if it abounded, the

more the sufferings of Christ abounded in him. Earthly things will intrude with their cares and anxieties, and the more the Christian hates them, the more are his sufferings. Paul knew that the consolation which abounded in Christ was more than proportionate to his sufferings. He was troubled, but not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not destroyed; for the life of Jesus was always made manifest in his body. He mourned the evil which he discovered in himself, or his fellow-man.

Such experience constrains to desire more and more the glorious consummation. Often is a dearly beloved one mourned. Should we not rather mourn sin and death, which have indeed for a time separated in presence only, and which seek to destroy everlastingly the bonds of a holy love? but they cannot. Therefore we do not mourn the loss of the dearest as if we had no hope. We mourn evil wheresoever found. Our sympathies are as wide as the world.

Christ now appoints unto them that mourn in Zion—he establishes them, in the midst of all, in the hope of the abundant glory. The clearer and the more keenly evil is apprehended, the more the consolation in Christ. What can be a stronger testimony to this than the prediction of the prophet? Does he tell us that Christ is come? that the Spirit is poured out? and that the Gospel of the glory of God is preached? Then, shall not the truths which form part of the same prediction have their fulfilment? There shall be beauty for ashes, joy for mourning, praise for heaviness. In the future, it is said, violence shall be no more heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls salvation, and thy gates praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever; the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. Turning, then, to these promises, let us look at the first. The paranomasia is striking. **יָפֶה**, beauty, is often used to signify the divine glory—

the light and splendour of the divine presence ; and אפר denotes dust, ashes, to which any substance burnt in the fire is reduced. All that is not of the Father is of the world—the glory of which is read in these ashes. In the place of which, all that is of the Father shall be established in the soul of the believer. It is beauty for ashes. Thus, then, while here he is in mourning, heaviness, he shall yet experience a joy unspeakable, and praise his God ; that, in the paradise of God, he may be a tree of righteousness—the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.

5. The meek shall inherit the earth. Who are the meek ? This word ננך stands in the closest connexion with עני both derived from נחך. A distinction is drawn thus :—“The former is applied to those who willingly endure with submission what they might escape from. The latter are they who patiently suffer without resistance.” A distinction without a difference. Let us turn to the Old Testament, for it is from it that the Lord gathers these precious contributions, as expressing that character which is a sweet savour unto God.

Isaac was fond of quietness and retirement. He was an example of patient resignation and cheerful obedience. He was the child of promise, being begotten after circumcision, after the crucifixion of the old nature. How else could he be the child of promise ? And when he blessed Esau, he trembled exceedingly. He ignored his own great work, typical of him who should come. He *blessed* the accursed, the uncrucified man, or nature. He had been for some time living upon the fat of the earth, and so was blind to the will of God. However, he was a meek man. He witnessed to the crucifixion, and therein was the will of God revealed. He could give up well after well, however needful for his worldly prosperity. He could go back from his just rights, rather than strive and contend with his fellow-man. He was the son fulfilling the Father's will. A child of promise ; he revealed the Father, for he possessed the will of God, an inestimable treasure—the informing power within.

Moses, the meekest of men, apart from his relation to Aaron, brings out the other side of the Christian character. He had, like Isaac, given up all—all that Egypt could bestow. The treasures of Egypt lay at his feet, but to be at the foot of the cross was a greater treasure. He chose rather to suffer affliction

with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ of greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward—the substance of things hoped for. The meekest of men walked with God and did his will. Isaac witnessed to an implicit obedience, as an expression of a death to the world, and the renunciation of all earthly ties. Moses, while he witnessed to the same, attested in his life *the indwelling of God*—the substance of all future blessings. The meekest of men possessed nothing here, contended not for the shadows of this life, but he had *an enduring substance*. He gave up all, and the will of God was his treasure, which he could not have without the divine nature itself. The meek, then, shall inherit the earth. What is this? What is it symbolical of? It is the new earth wherein righteousness shall dwell at that time, when God will beautify the meek with salvation, and all will be righteous. What the new earth shall be, no tongue can tell, for the creature itself will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

In Ps. xxxvii. the meek wait upon the Lord, and are contrasted with the wicked, who wait on earthly things and serve them. Their trust, their all is in the Lord, whose will they do, in whom they delight, to whom they commit their way—in a word, they rest in Him. Therefore he guides them in judgment, and teaches them his way. And he will arise to judgment, to save all the meek in the earth, when they *shall increase* their joy in the Lord.

6. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness. The true disciple is conscious of the presence of evil, and knows the worth of all things visible. He mourns sin. He bears with meekness the wrong-doing of men. Doing the will of God, he sits loose to all things here below. What, then, is righteousness? It would not be sufficient to say a conformity to the will of God. It was asked by the multitudes who followed Christ, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" The answer was, "This is the work of God: that ye believe *into him* whom he hath sent." A conformity to his will does not mean this. A man without Christ will strive to conform to what he conceives to be the will of God. Whereas, all our acts should be the manifestation of that will. The Spirit of the Father in us both

wills and does of his good pleasure. So we reveal the Father. This is righteousness. The Lord Jesus manifested a hungering and thirsting after righteousness. He was righteous, and so are we in him. The Lord said, Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father. Thus he was one with the Father. He was the righteous Son; he knew the righteous Father. And he hungered for this righteousness when he earnestly prayed that "all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they may be one in us." Whosoever, then, possesses Christ must do so—must possess him with all his characteristics. If, then, we are made partakers of the divine nature, God must work in us to will and to do of his good pleasure. If not, he is not there, for he cannot deny himself. Conformity is one thing, the will is another.

Built up in Christ, sealed by the Spirit of the Son, we cry Abba, Father. This is the righteousness of the covenant. For we can only cry this, Abba, Father, when we are crucified with Christ, so that Christ lives in us, and the life we live in the flesh is *in the faith of the Son of God*. If righteousness came in any other way, then Christ died in vain. Every one, then, must lay down his life that he might take it again, even as Christ gave us an example. As the Lord says, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."

This righteousness is the basis of the preceding beatitudes; and such is the nature of it, that, to realise the Paternal blessing, to look forward to the full manifestation of the kingdom, when all shall be holiness unto the Lord, there must be a hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

The term righteousness, then, brings out the Paternity with all it involves; it also induces a condition of soul for the full enjoyment of that Paternity. The Lord's words are life and power; every one of them is pregnant with precious truth; and there is an exquisite fitness in connecting righteousness with the sensations of hunger and thirst, which express an eager desire for their respective objects. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life: thus expressing how, by faith, we are

one with his body and his spirit—one with his death and his life. We hunger and we thirst for him. Happy are they who thus in all their ways honour and magnify the Father, for he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

7. This beatitude holds in the spiritual life as important a place as any that precedes it. To limit the term merciful to those who exhibit great kindness in meeting the temporal wants of others, would be to lose sight of an important ingredient in the Christian character.

The word *ελεεω*, to have mercy, represents the two Hebrew words, *חַנּוּן* and *רַחֵם*. The former respects the sinner, the latter God. David uses the former, saying, Have *mercy* upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble: mine eye is consumed with grief, my soul and my belly. For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed. (Ps. xxxi. 9, 10.) I said, Lord, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee. (Ps. xli. 4.) Whereas the latter word is the expression of one who contemplates the tender pity and compassionate love of Jehovah. "For a moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I *have mercy* on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." (Is. liv. 7, 8, 10.)

How, then, shall we reveal the Father—show that we are his children, if we possess not this feature of his character? Men, who are yet strangers to mercy, have to learn the first truth of Christianity. There is plenty of compassion and pity for those afflicted in temporal things; but where is there mercy because of the oppressor, for him who cries to God from the inner depths of his heart, "I have sinned against thee!"

If we have the Spirit of our Father, then must we be merciful and tenderly affected toward one another. A narrow Christianity lacks one essential element of a holy life. A party spirit must be unmerciful. In the Epistle to the Romans the Apostle addresses Jews and Gentiles. The former plumed themselves that they were God's elect. But the Apostle taught them that true

election was in righteousness—in Christ, the elect one; for God hated the fleshly nature—the Esau, but loved the spiritual—the Jacob. This should be the experience of every man, even as respecting himself. Wherefore God asks the narrow-minded Jew, Would you, in your exclusiveness, narrow my purpose? I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion upon whom I will have compassion, and upon whom I will I harden. Even Pharaoh was raised up to show forth the compassionate mercy of God in the destruction of evil, and the consequent deliverance of man. It was not in the destruction of Pharaoh that God took pleasure, but that through him he might teach the truths of his kingdom.

In every step of the Lord's dealings with him, in the unfolding of the evil that dwells in the heart of man in enmity to God, Pharaoh was taught his true character, that he might, through the mighty hand of God, learn redemption. But with all God's revelation of himself in keeping mercy for thousands, he hardened his heart. *He knew not the Lord.* Alas, how truly is it so with all who have as yet not learned what that meaneth, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice."

The Jews had great privileges: to them pertained the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises. Whose were the fathers, and of whom concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God *blessed* for ever. But, in their exclusiveness—in their narrow-mindedness—in their unmerciful spirit—they hardened their hearts against God. And the Apostle asks, What shall we say, then, that the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even that which is of faith. But Israel which followed after the law of righteousness, that is a holy love, have not attained to the law of righteousness. How could they, when their exclusiveness was extinguishing it, or rather driving them farther from it. The unmerciful spirit is a selfish spirit. He who knows what it is to obtain mercy will never allow any earthly consideration to disparage his own peace, or to stand in the way of shewing mercy to another. If we cannot show mercy according to the compassions and love of the Father, then we are represented as loving our oxen and our sheep; loving the perishing things of this world, while a brother

is bowed down, and we do not stir a finger to remove his burden.

In nothing do we so reveal the Father as in shewing mercy. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth. The earth is full of his mercy. What other perfection does he love to manifest more than this? If, then, we would know mercy, it will be *in delivering others from evil, and loving to do so.*

The everlasting love of the Father, the boundless love of Christ, the condescending love of the Spirit, express the mercy of God. If this love be ours, shall the wrong-doing of men check its coming forth? Let it come forth, though continued wrong-doing may drive the transgressor farther away, and harden him resisting it. In mercy, then, we must carry out the Spirit of our Father, not in acquiescing in evil, but in reproofing it, that we may deliver the oppressed enslaved by sin. Then, as we need mercy, we shall obtain it; for the Lord, as a God of judgment, overthrows all that would afflict the soul of man, and he waits that he may be gracious unto us. It is, then, a blessedness in shewing mercy, and we have therein a promise that when we need it we shall obtain it.

8. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Can this be said of any one? Is there any pure in the sight of God? Yes, truly; else the Lord would never have spoken of them as blessed.

It would be a mistake to seek for the inner purity of the heart, or to suppose the Lord would enforce the possession of it apart from the other beatitudes. The pure in heart pray in the Spirit, and faint not. They seek ever to be avenged of their adversary. Their old nature is their *adversary*, and ever will be while here; therefore are they to pray always. They know the desolating and destructive nature of sin which dwells therein. They mourn. They possess the righteousness of God—the foundation of all blessings. They hunger and thirst for its fulness. They give the fullest and freest play to the law of it; not allowing the wrong-doing of others to check it. These are pure in heart. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus *sets them free from the law of sin and death.* Such is the believer's experience. However, our holiness consists in our union with the Holy One of Israel, and we realise it only as we manifest it. This is our sanctification.

Thus we are holy as he is holy. Surely there can be no greater blessing than to see God. We see him as we manifest him, in the activities of his love; even *love out of a pure heart*. Thus, in the inner purity of our faith, we see him who is invisible.

Without holiness shall no man see the Lord, for our God is a consuming fire. This is the generation of them that seek thy face, O God of Jacob. They ascend the mount of the Lord, thus stand in the place of his holiness; they have a pure heart, and have not lifted up their soul unto vanity. The pure in heart seek the face of the Lord, and the promise is, "They that seek me shall find me." It is not for those who neglect so great a salvation to question this truth. Christianity attests it. Which is the result not indeed of enthusiasm or imagination, but of sober truth and experience.

The Apostle, after describing the love by which our Christian character is worked out, says, Now we see through a glass enigmatically. We are a mirror to reflect Christ; and in that mirror we shall see God—we see him enigmatically. Having put on Christ, we are established in him, sealed with the Spirit of the Son, who is of God made unto us wisdom by his cross, righteousness in the divine life, sanctification in the operation of his love, and redemption in a full deliverance from all that offendeth and maketh a lie. The Apostle proceeds to contemplate the Lord enthroned in glory, observing that the ministration of Moses was one of glory, while that of the Gospel was of far more exceeding glory. Both were indeed revelations of the Father—the one on tables of stone, the other in the Spirit; the one outward, the other inward. But the last is the fulfilment of the covenant. Men do not see this; they cannot, the veil is *on their heart*. The Jews could not behold it; which is the case now, not only as respects the law, but also the Gospel in its far more excelling glory. Men are blind to it. They are blinded by the god of this world. But when they turn to the Lord, the veil is taken away, *for where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty*. The veil *of the flesh* being removed in Christ, we behold the glory of the Lord—a treasure in earthen vessels; and so, with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord.

If this be not our experience, then the god of this world hath

blinded our eyes, lest the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto us. The pure in heart then see God; they seek to reveal, to manifest him. They see him in their life. Hereafter this mirror will give place to visible sight, when the glorious consummation shall be in beholding God as he is, for we shall be made like unto him.

9. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

These are not peacemakers as promoters of peace in families or communities; nor peace preservers, nor those peaceably inclined, nor peacemakers in their own souls, nor even peace preachers, but peace doers. In them peace is established, and they are doers of it, even, as we say, doers of truth—that is, their works are wrought in God. This may be called the beatitude of perfection. It sets forth a perfect man—the finish of the Christian character.

It is important to know what this peace is, lest we be deceived by a false peace. In this beatitude the Lord teaches where to look for peace; not, indeed, in gifts, talents, education, or any circumstance, as communion with a particular church, people, or sect, but in the development of the spiritual life. The wisdom of God is first pure, then peaceable.

Peace must be established within; and this is so only when we are established in Christ, and sealed by his Spirit. He is our peace, having by his cross abolished the enmity—witnessed by the law of ordinances being taken away, the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile being removed.

If it be asked, Do not the other beatitudes imply this? we answer, Yes, truly. Then is there any, and what, accessory idea conveyed by the term peace? We must again turn to the Old Testament, by which the New Testament writers were most truly taught and instructed, and there ascertain the import of this word. It is a blessed promise to all: Peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord. This peace is safety, wholeness, completeness, perfection. It is tranquility, as man's highest happiness: a security no contingency can shake. Come unto me, says the Lord, and I will give you rest. Yea, the earth may be removed, the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, the waters thereof roar and be troubled, and the mountains shake with the swelling thereof, yet peace, in calm majesty,

reigns within, not only amidst the heat and bustle of worldly cares and anxieties, but also while kingdoms and peoples are convulsed. A peace so rare, yet so circumstanced, is like the precious pearl that lies undisturbed by the raging waters of the dark and briny ocean wherein it is found.

Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel. (1 Kings xxii. 44.) Bathsheba said to Adonijah, comest thou peaceably (ii. 13). The word there expressing the absence of enmity, and the presence of friendship. In the same book it signifies the completion of the temple. So *was ended* all the work that King Solomon made for the house of God (vii. 51.) So *he finished* the house (ix. 25). The symbolic teaching of the temple need not here be dwelt upon; suffice it to say, that the divine presence only constitutes a building, a temple. It represents the church of God; for in the heavenly Jerusalem, God himself is the temple. The work of Solomon was to finish the house. The work of the true Son is that he may present to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish. The word rendered peace thus conveys the idea of completion or perfection.

In like manner Isaiah uses the word. Thou wilt keep him in peace, peace, that is, *perfect peace*, whose mind is stayed on thee (xxvi. 8.) Again, the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness shall be quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in an habitation of peace—sure dwellings and quiet resting places (xxxii. 17, 18.) Righteousness is God in us and we in him; and an abiding confidence, as the effect of righteousness, is peace. This peace is to him that is far off and to him that is nigh. And it is proclaimed to all, thus:—I have seen his ways and will heal him; I will lead him also and *restore* comforts (lvii. 18 & 19). The term restore is the same word rendered peace. The prophet also uses this word in the sense of completeness, perfectness; thus, Jehovah, our Redeemer, that *performeth* the counsel of his messengers. So Cyrus shall *perform* all my pleasure. So Hezekiah mourns, repeating in his prayer from day to night, Wilt thou make an end of me?

There can be no place of safety or security than that which righteousness offers. Peace, then, will be confidence and assurance

in God, the effect of a perfect and abiding trust in God; in a word, it is to be perfect in God. It expresses, then, not only a perfect and complete end of a certain condition, but also a consolation in the enjoyment of it. I will heal him also, and restore consolation. (Is. lvii. 18.) The ideas of completeness and perfectness in the word is signified by the Psalmist, who says, If I have rewarded evil to him that was at peace with me; yea, I have delivered him that without cause is my enemy: let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it. These two limits include the whole human family. The one at peace with us would be in the expressive force of the word, the exact antithesis of him who was an enemy without a cause. (Ps. vii. 4.)

The beatitude, then, is the blessedness of the man *who does* this peace, whose life is the manifestation of the spiritual life developed and matured within.

The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost. We are to follow after the things that make for peace—things whereby we may edify one another. What is this but the building of the spiritual temple of God? So that, in following after peace, we follow after others' perfection that we may all, as one body, be presented perfect and complete in all the will of God. Such are the children of God.

In these seven beatitudes we are taught what constitutes the child of God. Where, then, is the man whose spiritual life is thus developed? The Lord anticipates the reply, saying, When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith upon the earth? Nevertheless there is a right seed, and there will be, so long as the world lasts, for it is the salt of the earth, and although it be not manifested to man, it is before God.

Thus the divine ideal of a perfect man is before us. *The seven beatitudes develope the Christian life.* Each one being a pledge for the others; that where any one exists there will be the rest, for he, thus blessed, is a child of God. The middle beatitude implies the first and the seventh. It implies spiritual life—a filial relation to the everlasting Father. Righteousness is the foundation, the basis of the whole superstructure, and blessed is he who hungers and thirsts after it. He is athirst for the living God. This life manifests itself in a threefold form, thus: he who is poor in spirit, will be merciful; he who mourns, is pure

in heart; and he, who is meek, shall delight himself in an abundance of peace. Mark then the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace. For a fuller exposition of these beatitudes, see the *Analogy of the Faith*, p. 231—294.

10. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.

When the Lord Jesus taught the things of his kingdom he showed that Christianity did not offer any meretricious attractions or allurements like the world, but that it was a stern and sober reality. He taught his followers what they were to expect. Here would be no rest for them. Suffering and affliction—a crown of thorns was all that the world bestowed upon him; and the servant was not greater than his Lord. The world hates Christ because he testifies that it is only evil, and that all that is in it must be crucified, for it is not of the Father. It is in antagonism to him. So then, if it hates him who begets, it hates him also who is begotten of him.

To fight is the believer's glory, for he fights with no uncertain issue. He reveals the Holy One, and is mighty in the pulling down of strongholds, and can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth him.

Surely there can be no greater testimony to the truth of Christianity than the internal evidence of the Word of God. What religion ever demanded the unsullied purity, the self sacrificing love—the essential elements of a Christian character, as found in the teaching of the Lord? But men confound the treasure with the earthen vessel that contains it.

However unaccountable may appear the wrongful acts of men, yet they are an abiding testimony to the unchanging hostility of the world in its counterfeit pretensions to the truth.

The Christian knows that he is a child of God. The unbeliever knows that he is not. The one possesses the beatitudes, the other does not. Hence the unrelenting and persecuting spirit of the one against the other.

It is asked, Why does the world persecute? Men think it is getting wiser, and so progressing. It used to persecute to the death; but now that civilization advances, and men are enlightened, surely it cannot persecute. But this is Satan's lie.

Where is righteousness there is persecution; for we are persecuted for righteousness' sake. The ceaseless efforts of Satan are to destroy it. Sin strikes at the Paternity. It hates it. The Lord came revealing the Father, and said to them who obeyed not the truth, Ye hate both me and my Father. Again, this beatitude demands a *perfect* character, for such only are persecuted. They possess righteousness, are partakers of the divine nature, in which they cry, Abba, Father. It is not something future, but a present attainment, for he is now persecuted. This is an unanswerable argument, *that the perfection of the Christian character is now*; and though the world may be against him, he possesses the kingdom of the heavens.

In the last beatitude we learn that righteousness and Jesus are convertible terms, for, in the possessing of the one, we possess the other. If a man believe *into* Jesus Christ, not about him, but *into* him, he has righteousness—he is righteous before God. He is separate from the world, he touches not the unclean thing. How can any one who has begun in the Spirit, which implies crucifixion of the old nature—the flesh, be perfected by the flesh?

11. The former beatitude gathers up all that constitutes the Christian character—all that is implied in the seven beatitudes preceding it. In this, it is shown to be the Son of God in us, as Jehovah our righteousness. In the preceding verse persecution is there as a general term, including all adverse power. Here it is as against a perfect character, who strives to apprehend that for which he is apprehended, if in Christ Jesus. That is, he is persecuted because of the image of the Father reflected in a holy life, and which cannot be reflected where the dross of earthly-mindedness remains. He who compromises with the world, does so in order to escape its persecution. Thus, in these beatitudes, there is no vague and indefinite teaching what the following of Christ means. Christ has healed all; wherefore the call is to all to leave all, and be led by the Spirit—to touch not the unclean things, and possess the righteousness of God. We possess Christ Jesus; we strive to love him, that is, he lives in us; and we are persecuted, as he says, If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of

the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, that is, effectually called you unto myself, therefore the world hateth you. It has been, it ever will be so ; for he that is born after the flesh, will persecute him that is born after the Spirit. This enemy *we carry about with us*, even in ourselves ; but in Christ we overcome ; for, if Christ be in us, the body is dead because of sin, and the Spirit is life because of righteousness. In Christ we have died to ourselves, and so ceased from the flesh. If we be in the flesh we are no Christians. The world hates the cross, which purges away the evil. He, then, who bears the cross, bears the power of God, which is against all evil. Is there then any wonder that the world should hate the Christian—the perfect man ? for he carries that which is its greatest torment. It reviles him. It says all manner of evil falsely against him ; not indeed in a way gross and coarse. No ; the world is too civil ; society is too polite. But it seeks to seduce, and if it fail, then it will accuse, even as of old, when it asked, Doth Job serve God for nought ? What a sad contradiction is stamped upon these words. It is the world. In its ignorance it reviles the Father. How can he be served in fear. Fear hath torment. This the devils have, and they tremble. But a reverential, filial fear rests in the truth itself. When the Christian is thus reviled, the Father is also. Is it not the highest blessing to know the Father, to be able to cry Abba, to be *in* the faith of the Son of God ? Satan knows not the Father, for the truth is not in him. And the world knows him not, for all that is in the world is not of him. In the perfect providence of God, the Christian is persecuted. It is permitted, and the false accusation is still, “ Put forth thine hand and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.” Is the world altered ? Is it otherwise than it ever has been ? The Christian is reviled, calamity after calamity follows, and persecution is permitted ; yet the more it rages, the utterance of a simple faith is, “ Jehovah gave, Jehovah hath taken away, blessed be the name of Jehovah.” In prosperity or adversity, in wealth or poverty, he stands fast in God. But the world, envious, and rankling with bitter hatred, beholding the meekness and tranquility of a holy life, says all manner of evil falsely. We hear of the refinements of cruelty practised by a fanatical and uncivilized people, but there is no refinement

of spiritual wickedness, which is not implied in the expression, Does he fear God for nought? Then rejoice and be exceeding glad, rejoice and leap for joy, not because you are reviled and persecuted, and all manner of evil is spoken against you falsely, but because great is your reward in the heavens. Some men court persecution, thinking thereby they are martyrs for the truth.

Persecution by the world is in the economy of God; and while we possess our souls in our patience, it works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Thus all things work together for good.

The prophets suffered. This incidental notice of a fact shows how the one truth is for all generations of men. Possessing the same principles of the covenant, they suffered the same persecution. The Spirit of Christ, which was in them, testified before-hand, the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which should follow. As prophets they declared the Father's will respecting his children—faithful and rebellious. By the latter they were persecuted. Yet they had the same testimony in the sufferings of Christ and a present reward, with an enlarged capacity for the inheritance, and an earnest longing for the consummation.

13. We now approach a very instructive and important passage, by which we may perceive that the Lord has no sympathy with abstract religion; which is, indeed, the fruitful source of all our differences. Practical religion, which the Bible in every line of it inculcates, is only a supplementary matter. Speculations and theories, which bolster up a self-complacency, and ignore the truth, that everything out of Christ Jesus is sin, is the religion of the age.

Whom does the Lord address as the salt of the earth? As yet the fishermen knew not the blessedness of true Christianity. They had, indeed, as representing the truth in relation to all men, left all—all *externally*; but they individually knew nothing as yet of the cross; so, that, their knowledge of Christ would be *that only after the flesh*. The Lord addressed the multitudes—all whom he had healed, calling them to make effective the truths to which he, in his life and teaching testified—to put on Christ, and make not provision for the flesh.

The parable of the salt is suggested by the preceding subject.

It tacitly implies the existence of evil, and the wrong-doing of men. In Christ we possess this conservative element of the earth; we possess the most glorious perfection of God in its unceasing hostility to sin, and every form of corruption.

Salt is of common things the most common. It forms one of the elements that compose the earth. It is found in a number of mines, springs, and forms numerous strata in the bowels of the earth. It is an important constituent of the briny ocean, and from which the waters derive their saltiness. It is a necessary ingredient in bread—the staff of life. Its uses are abundant: it enters into the manufacture of the most simple, useful and common articles, and necessities of life. Hence by its universality it, by the mercy of God, is ever teaching the value, the importance, the necessity of possessing that glorious perfection of God, of which it is the symbol. Salt has an antiseptic property—it prevents decay.

If it were not almost universally present in our food, we should be subject to much disease. From time immemorial it has been known that without salt man would miserably perish. And it is said that among horrible punishments, entailing certain death, that of feeding on saltless food, prevailed in barbarous times. Maggots and corruption are said to be the distressing symptoms which saltless food engenders. The quadrupeds of North America have an instinctive passion for salt. Springs of brine and earthy rocks impregnated with saline matter are interspersed over the continent. It was used in all the sacrifices and oblations of the ancients. Homer expressly mentions “sacred salt.” It is a touching symbol of hospitality. Salt in its purity is white. Each separate grain possesses the same properties as in the aggregate.

The Lord says, “Salt is good.” “Have salt in yourselves.” “Every sacrifice must be salted with fire.” In its antiseptic character it is the emblem of holiness—the crown of God’s perfections. Holiness is not the result of any intellectual habit, nor the cultivation of an individual grace, but the possession of Christ. Have salt in yourselves, is evidently a definite meaning. Again, fire is an emblem of holiness—our God is a consuming fire. This fire will try every man’s work. It will separate the dross from the pure metal. Fire is holiness in its separating,

purging, purifying character. Every sacrifice, which is in truth the offerer himself, can be accepted only as it is holy; this is represented by the salt, with the accessory idea imported by the fire, that all that is foreign to the divine life is purged away.

But if the salt has lost its savour—and it may lose it, as every one knows who seeks to walk before God blameless and in love—then it is only fit to be trodden under foot of men.

Mandrill, after describing the valley of salt, about four miles from Aleppo, says, “There is along one side of the valley—that towards Gebal—a small precipice, about two men’s length, occasioned by the continual taking away of the salt. I broke,” he says, “a piece of it, of that part that was exposed to the rain, sun, and air; though it had the sparks and particles of salt, yet it had perfectly lost its savour. The inner part, which was connected with the rock, retained its savour, as I found by proof.” Salt loses its purity when alloyed with dirt. It loses its savour, here at least, *when separated from the rock*. So if we be separated from Christ, we serve the flesh, and our holiness is defiled. We are only salt that has lost its savour. We are cast out: no longer in the kingdom of the heavens: no longer in the kingdom of light; but cast out as contemptible things of time and sense. Having been once enlightened, tasted the heavenly gift, made partakers of the Holy Ghost, tasted the good word of the powers of the kingdom to come, we are now only fit to be trodden under foot of men. This is, indeed, a solemn warning. Great blessings have been set before us; then let us take care that we be not drawn aside by the allurements of the world; that we shrink not from a faithful testimony in the power of a holy life, despite the vilest calumny or fiercest persecution. A mere profession of Christianity is, in the sight of God, rather a contemptible thing, than the open spirit of enmity.

14. The connexion is simple and easy. Salt, in its conservative power, is hostile to all corruption; the seeds of which have been sown broadcast, and continually spring forth. All things have inherently the elements of decay, and for which the cross of Christ is the only antidote; by whom Satan is cast out, sin destroyed, the enmity slain, and the flesh mortified. They, therefore, who bear the cross, are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost its savour—if we profess Christianity, yet

ignore the cross, which is the wisdom of God, and the power of God, we build again the things which Christ has destroyed, we are necessarily cast out. But if, on the contrary, we strive always to bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be manifested in our body, we are the light of the world ; for a city set upon a hill *cannot* be hid. Being on the hill of the holiness of God, the light must come forth. All obstacles for revealing this light are removed. We are then, indeed, come to the kingdom—the city of the living God—to Mount Zion. And so long as there is a grain of salt upon the earth, the light of the kingdom will be revealed.

“The light of the world,” and particularly the word rendered light, the Lord Jesus has applied to himself. He says, I am the light of the world. He is the Sun of righteousness, who has risen with healing in his wings ; and as the Son of God he streams forth the benign rays of his righteousness into the souls of men. Happy, then, are they into whom this light has shown, who are made partakers of it ; for by the indwelling of Jesus Christ they know experimentally the glory of God.

The Lord Jesus now dwells in the light, in all its undiminished glory. When on earth he witnessed to the kingdom of light ; he was crucified to the world, and so not of it ; he lived in the power of a new life, bestowed upon him by the outpoured Spirit. He verily was the salt of the earth—the light of life. He saw no darkness ; and if we follow him we shall dwell in the light, as he is in the light, and shall not see darkness. His cross has put away the darkness—has rent the veil—and the glory of God shines forth unto us, and we have the light of life. Being then *children* of the light—children of the resurrection—our path is *that of a righteous man*, which is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto perfect day. To partake of the glory of God in the power of Christ’s resurrection will be the great object of our life. We forget the things which are behind, and press forward to the prize of the calling of God from on high. And our trials work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen ; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Light is an elementary force, and its power is indestructible. If, then, the kingdom be one of light, and that in its most intensive form, and the Word of God reveals it as nigh to every man, even as the Lord said to his enemies, "It is within you;" and, since Christ Jesus lighteth every man coming into the world; and, further, since every man is called to arise from the dead, and possess the light, how thick must be that veil! how dark must be that heart that resists—that lacks it!

What is there, then, may we truly ask, that God has not done for man? Light is shining forth, and it cannot be hid. When we hear the fiat at creation, "Let there be light!" and contemplate its universal diffusion, and how that it has entered into the constitution of all things, are we not thereby taught that, independently of any created thing, or of what man might do in time, the gracious purpose of the Eternal One is that the kingdom of light might be unto all. And so the Lord implies as he argues from the experience of men, "Neither do men light a candle and put it under a measure, but they put it in a candlestick, that it may give light unto all in the house." Thus does Matthew continually maintain the universal tendency of the Gospel. Whosoever, therefore, practically denies the truth, makes God a liar, for he obscures the light, which is for all. But if we be Christians, we manifest the light: we do the Father's will: it works within. And we let our light so shine before men, that they seeing our good works, glorify our Father which is in the heavens.

16. Here there can be no misunderstanding; men may fight for words and phrases, terms and Shibboleths, marks and indications of party and sect; notwithstanding, our works are inseparable from righteousness or unrighteousness. If we possess the light, being therefore light in the Lord—for it is in his light only that we see light—it must shine, it must come forth. The teaching of the day is identical with that of Nicodemus, *a teacher in Israel*—a standard, indeed, acceptable to man, rising no higher than its source, making void the Word of God. He came *by night*, and was admonished that men loved darkness better than light, for what is born of the flesh is flesh. He had not seen, he had not entered the light. The Lord repudiated his teaching, and after meeting his cavils in respect to the truth, told him that he who

doeth truth, who is born of water—putting away the filth of the flesh—and of the Spirit, cometh to the light, that he may make manifest that his works are wrought *in God*. Thus only do we glorify our Father which is in the heavens.

The solar beam, analysed in the spectrum, is said to be the most marvellous and mysterious object in the physical world. It affords an analysis of exquisite order and perfection. There are always the same prismatic colours in their same constant proportions, with the intervention of numerous dark lines equally constant in their character. When God declared the sun and moon to be for seasons, he likewise said they were for signs. Created things are shadows of great realities. However, visible things but imperfectly set forth invisible. God is light; and in him is *no darkness at all*. How, then, shall we possess this light, have fellowship with God, if we admit darkness into this light? for we are commanded to let our light so shine that we may glorify him in whom there is no darkness at all. Christ Jesus is God, and is the light of the world. If this light be in us, and undergoes its analysis, it will come forth in all its prismatic colours, and exhibit the sevenfold graces or beatitudes of the Christian character, without any of those dark hues which are ever present in the analysis of the spectrum; for thus only shall we glorify him in whom there is no darkness at all.

It is thus only in the marvellous light of God—which, to know, is to be realised—that we see light. A beautiful illustration is afforded by the beloved Gaius. Brethren and strangers bore witness before the church, not of his charity, but of his love—an active operating principle within. It is, indeed, a miserable counterfeit when charity is paraded for love. Love never faileth; but to mark and note isolated acts would be only to disparage him whose whole life would testify to the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus—that love coming forth unfettered, unclouded, unimpaired, might glorify his Father which is in the heavens.

17. Notwithstanding the great teacher of mankind had so clearly and distinctly set forth the true kingdom—the invisible Zion—and enforced the condition indispensable in order to belong to it, his hearers, blinded by prejudice and a formal religion, could in no wise see how this superior revelation would supersede that which was old, effete, and passing away.

In truth, that which was outward and shadowy, could have no meaning or significance only through that which was substantial and invisible. Anticipating them, he attested that what he was then doing was superior to all before, as the substance is to the shadow. That the glory of the former must absorb that of the latter, even as the moon pales in the glorious light of the sun.

Wedded predilections, upon which men stake their dearest interests, blind, warp, and narrow their minds, till they find themselves upon no sure or certain ground; and if the bands of party were dissolved, there would be but little otherwise than a Babel of discord.

The Lord Jesus, reading the thoughts of his hearers, anticipated them, saying, I come not to destroy, but to fulfil.

In explaining the fulfilling of the law, let us clearly understand its relation to the Gospel; and in doing this, we must steer clear of the vague and mystified views in respect to it put forth on every side.

To understand the use of the term law, it will be as well to refer to the Epistle to the Romans, where we find four distinct uses of it: 1. The works of the law; 2. The righteousness of the law; 3. The law of righteousness; and 4. A law, without which there would not be sin.

The first respects the ceremonial or moral law, or both. Strictly speaking, there can be no works of the law. The Apostle, in using this phrase, adopts the popular idea; it means works of the flesh having respect to the law, implying that the moral and ceremonial law may be observed outwardly by the flesh, and this, *in a sense*, blamelessly. (Phil. iii. 6.) But this is not, in truth, the works of the law which God ever demands, and to which the Old and New Testaments witness, where it is written: "The man that doeth these things shall live in them." He does not live because he does them; but he does them because he lives. It is not do this and live, but live and do.

To possess the righteousness of the law, we want not the works of the flesh, but that the flesh be crucified—a redemption from all evil. It is said the law never could give life; yet it attested life. Where righteousness is—which is life—there the law is; even as Jehovah says, Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments; which if a man do, he shall live in them.

The violation of the law affords no interpretation of it. An outward law, written upon two tables of stone, with its ceremonies, enforced by awful sanctions, was only a schoolmaster or child-leader. It witnessed to bondage. So long as it was an outward thing, it was such only to bring us into Christ that sin might be crucified. As *an outward* thing, it gave knowledge of sin; and by its holy requirements it was the strength of sin. But when the commandment comes to a child, it comes as an internal law, and necessitates redemption and righteousness, even Jehovah, *who is the righteousness of the law*, that it may be fulfilled.

The existence of the law, as an outward thing, was a violation of it. It thus gave knowledge of a soul being enslaved to the flesh without redemption. And the Apostle might well say, The law was not made for a righteous man, but for the disobedient. The patriarchs did not require an outward law, but the children of Israel did, because they were not righteous, had not the righteousness of the law.

The righteousness of the law implies the 'enmity slain, evil destroyed, as in the death of the victim standing in the place of the sinner. Righteousness is then revealed by the blood being carried into the most holy place. In the blood is the life. It may here be remarked that this mode of speech is not contrary to physical truth. We inhale the atmospheric air, which is decomposed in its passage to the lungs; the oxygen, *separated from its noxious combinations*, becomes the indispensable element in the support of life; so, typical of life itself, giving to the blood its ruby and bright appearance, and is taken up by the blood, and deposited in every part of the human frame. The blood then returns in its dark venous state for fresh life, only to repeat the process.

Through the blood, *in which is life*, we have full remission; that is, by partaking of this life. For, as we have shown, *our sins are not remitted until the purpose of the Father is perfected in us*, being partakers of a death to sin, and a life in the Son of God, denoted by the sprinkling with blood.

The blood being brought into the holy of holies, represented *resurrection life*—even *our life*—in the presence of God, which *is righteousness*, even that which the law demands—the righteousness of the law; by the possession of which only are we

cleansed from all sin. Of this righteousness the ceremonial law outwardly testified, for it is in this righteousness that man lives, and by it he fulfils the statutes and the judgments of God.

The law of righteousness is distinct from the works of the law—the works of the flesh. It is the operating principle of that life—of the divine nature within—of that righteousness of the law. It is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. In one word, it is love. A law which, evidently, can never be attained to by any works of the flesh, which must be crucified. It is, then, of faith, by which the substance of things hoped for *works within, and is demonstrated in the life.* (Heb. xi. 1.)

Lastly, the law of God's paternity. This includes the last two. Sin is not imputed where there is no law. If the paternity had failed in the law of its being, there would not have been sin. But, since it has ever operated, as the Lord says, I and my Father worketh hitherto, hence the strength of sin. For it is the very essence of sin to be antagonistic to the paternity, as the Lord himself testified—"If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they would not have had sin." Sin and death, in their very law, are ever in antagonism to the paternity. These two laws cannot co-exist; they cannot work at the same time in any man, for the one excludes the other.

Having, then, clearly apprehended the use of the term "law," let us first notice the epithets, moral and ceremonial, applied to it. A man must be righteous *to fulfil* both. In himself he should possess what the ceremonial law symbolizes; and, in his life, be the expression of the whole moral law contained in the Ten Commandments. In them is the whole duty of man. The first three demand our adoption in faith and love; a revelation of the righteousness of the law—of the law of righteousness, and the law of the paternity—the highest conception of morality, and in the very nature of things. Then, in the fourth—the Sabbath—the sign of the covenant, universal in its tendency—that as the three commandments witness to the foundation of the covenant in a Triune God, so the fourth, being with all flesh, is included all ceremonies, for to this one sign all others converge. It is the central sign of all, for Jehovah is our rest. In the second table the relationships of life, as representing the higher and spiritual, are, with their claims, fulfilled only in that love which we possess

as the children of God. And the ten, signifying totality, comprise the whole duty of man.

The Jews, separate from other nations, were, in their national life, outward witnesses to redemption and blessing, in which all the families of the earth were blessed. Jehovah in all his covenant mercies was revealing himself by them; and had they realised that which their wilderness condition taught, they would have possessed the righteousness of God—the righteousness of the law; and would then have manifested the law of righteousness, and so would have fulfilled the law.

But they could not look to the end of what was to be abolished. They could not see the necessity and effect of the cross; for until the old man was crucified, the carnal commandment did not cease. All carnal obedience is darkness. It makes God a liar, for it practically contradicts the testimony he has given of his Son. And even now, when the Word of God is read, *the veil* is still on men's hearts.

The ceremonial pointed to the moral which was within the veil, and showed the necessity of a death to sin, in order that that veil might be rent; for until we possess the life that enters within the veil, we cannot obey the moral law. It was said to the Jews, If ye will obey my voice, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure above all people, for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be *unto me*, said Jehovah, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.

If we have formed a correct idea of the law, it will not be difficult to trace its relation to the Gospel, and its fulfilment in Christ.

It not only gave knowledge of sin, but was a child-leader *into* Christ: since the covenant was before confirmed in Christ, circumcision and the whole ceremonial law must have pointed to his coming, as the end, the perfecting, the filling-up, yea, the substance that gave existence to the types and shadows which went before. Further, the very principles—the principles of the kingdom to which the offerings and various details of the law witnessed—necessitated Christ. So that to stop short of him was to embrace only outward things. Then, if the Jews made a carnal observance of it—the way of righteousness; yea, sought thus to obtain the law of righteousness, they would not, they

could not, the enmity being uncrucified, receive their Messias when he came. They understood not the spiritual import of circumcision, or of the ceremonial law. They did not see how the fulfilment of it necessitated the putting off of the body of the flesh: therefore they could not look to the end of that which was to be abolished. They lived in the flesh. They did not see Christ. Abraham saw him, and the prophets saw him, and rejoiced.

While they sought to obey the law in their uncrucified nature, they hardened their hearts: they were as adamant.

Christ, as the end—the fulfilment—of the law, belonged to the legal dispensation. Hence its glory. It was a ministration of death, not, indeed, to man, but to sin. It was holy, righteous, and good. The Gospel, as the ministration of the Spirit of life, excels in glory. The whole legal dispensation centered in Christ, and so radiated from him, as to be ever testifying to that primary principle, of which circumcision was the sign—a death—a putting off of the body of the flesh—a being crucified to the world, and so separated unto God.

And, since he has now entered into the holiest of all with his own blood, he hath consecrated for us a new and living way by the Holy Ghost; that we may draw near, in full assurance of faith. Thus, in Christ Jesus, according to his name, we see the connexion between the law and the prophets, and between the old and new dispensations—the law and the Gospel.

As a Christian man, the Lord testified to those principles of the covenant, which are revealed for every man. He called himself the Son of man, not only because it expressed the idea of the covenant with all flesh, but that in this nature he became the end—the substance of the law. He fulfilled it in putting away the sin of the world, and then, in the Spirit of the Father, he manifested him, as it was said: *A body hast thou prepared me: lo, I come to do thy will, O my God! yea, thy law is within my heart.*

We can have no sympathy with that traditional teaching that Christ fulfilled perfectly the moral law—doing it for us; so as to make up our deficiency, and give us thereby a stock of works. If this were the case, what becomes of the operating principle of the kingdom. Such traditions rob us of the truth, which we

are to hold fast in its integrity and simplicity. If Christ Jesus be in us, we are in this world what he is; we walk as he walked; for he is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever. Thus, do we work out our salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in us to will and to do of his good pleasure. We are saved, not by believing that a certain debt has been paid for us; and then, that certain fulfilments of the law have been placed to our credit, but by being in Christ Jesus, walking not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

All nature witnesses that life cannot come forth, be manifested but through redemption. Except the seed die it abides alone. The membranous coating of the seed must burst, else it is alone. It may be that this outer coating becomes tough, then the seed perishes—there is no life; but, if there be rain, it will burst, and the seed will develop life. Likewise the shell of the egg, at the full period of incubation, must be broken, else the life cannot come forth, and is not manifested. It is as if it had never been. The commandment is, Sanctify unto me all the first-born. Why? Because *whatsoever openeth* the womb among the children of Israel, *of man and of beast*, it is mine. (Ex. xiii. 2.) The house of bondage is broken up—thrown off like the chipped shell, never again to be occupied. The terms first-born and Israel are identical. The spiritual seed having been redeemed, they are commanded to sanctify the first-born, and to remember the day in which they came out from Egypt—out of the house of bondage. The law, when it said, thou art mine, demanded a realisation of redemption, even as the prophets, saying, Thus saith the Lord, that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel; fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, *I will be with thee*; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee: for I am the Lord *thy God*, the Holy One of Israel. (Is. xlii. 1—3.)

Paul illustrates these truths, as he says, Know ye not, brethren, for I speak to them that know the law, how that the law hath dominion over a man as long *as he liveth*. So long as he is uncrucified he is a slave to sin; he is under the power and dominion of sin. Nevertheless, the law, which is holy, righteous, and good,

does not relax its claim, but holds man in his relation to it, and so as a slave, because he knows not its freedom.

The law attests that the whole earth is the Lord's. He has redeemed it. The slave abideth not in the house for ever, but the son abideth ever. Man was created in the image of God. His will was then free. It was God's will ; and the law was the operating principle of his inner being. When he parted with that image he was in that of sin ; he became changed to the law, and his whole being enmity to it.

When it was said to him, " have dominion," he was lord of all, no created thing could rule over him. Nay, no law, not even that which was the transcript of the divine mind, for, as the law of his being, it was subject unto him. There is no neutral ground, since, through redemption, we are either under the law, or it is the operating principle of our life.

Christ was made under the law. He was made sin. He was made a curse ; and by the offering of himself he brought us out from this condition. He purchased us. The original word, translated redeemed, has the accessory idea of a market-place, suggesting the offering for sale of slaves. In the force of the compound word, he purchased us out of this. He purchased us not from the Father, neither from Satan. The idea extends not to the seller, but only to the condition of those whom, by his one act, he set free. The death of Christ is our manumission, our freedom, brought about, not by paying something, but by removing the burden, and its cause. Thus, the woman which hath a husband is bound by the law of her husband so long as he liveth, but if *the husband be dead*, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So, then, if while her husband liveth, she be married to another, she shall be called an adulteress ; but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another. This represents man—body and soul. The body or flesh is the old man, the soul is as the woman ; the soul is united to the old man, and cannot marry another, cannot be united to God. No ; the old man must first die—be crucified. The Jews, though they rested in the law, knew it not. They made their boast of God, and approved things excellent ; but the Apostle asks them, Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery ? They claimed God

as their husband, while the law yet had dominion over them. Whereas, had they realised the death of Christ, the soul would have been set free, the old man being crucified, and then united to God, they would have brought forth fruit unto him.

The death of Christ is our death, the death of all men. So that being set free, we may, by a holy love, fulfil the law and the prophets in bringing forth fruit unto God. The law is thus fulfilled in Christ, and it must be also fulfilled by every one, naming the name of Christ as the law of their inner being. The world, then, is reconciled to God, and not God to the world. For, when was the Father otherwise than what he is at any time? Was he different to man, after the coming of Christ, to what he was before? Was his love otherwise after the death of the Son to what it was when he gave the Son, and in giving him, commended his love, that it might be a power in us? It is not the Father, but we who change. In the Paternity of God is found every man's birthright, and it involves all that is necessary to the full enjoyment of it. So the ceremonial law leads us to Christ; and then its moral law represents that which becomes the law of our being, as it is fulfilled by Christ Jesus in us.

Thus, then, Christ has fulfilled the law, not by a mere obedience to types, ceremonies, rites, and prophecies, or by spiritualising, elevating, enlarging, and perfecting the moral law; but by the simple perfect unrestrained manifestation of those principles, which gave existence to types, and by which only the moral law was a living reality and power.

18. The Lord, in the preceding verse, alludes also to the prophets: not, indeed, as referring to particular predictions, for the spirit of the whole is the testimony of Jesus, who testified to the Father.

The allusion to the law and the prophets is to those principles which are revealed by the Old and New Testaments, and subordinately by the ceremonial and moral law. Each of the relative parts brings into greater prominence the principle to which it more particularly testifies. As here, with regard to prophecy, I will take you from among the heathen, and bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new

spirit will I put within you ; and I will take the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh ; and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes. Ye shall keep my judgments, and do them : And ye shall dwell in the land which I gave to your fathers, and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. The two principles of the covenant fulfilled in Christ the Son of God, and every child of the covenant, who possesses him, are here again and again repeated. And we cannot fail to perceive how that while the law brings forth prominently redemption, the prophets, spiritual life. Five times these two principles are referred to :—the cleansing from our filthiness by the clean water, and its correlative : I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes : I will take you from among the heathen, and bring you unto your own land : A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you : I will take away the stony heart, and give you a heart of flesh ; and, lastly, doing the judgments of God, and dwelling in the land. Thus, they who fulfil the law know that they are redeemed ; and who fulfil the prophets are children of light, and so, in both, glorify their Father which is in heaven.

Our duty, then, is to herald forth the kingdom of the heavens. There is but one science for making the heart of man better ; and it is that to which creation, providence and grace ever testify. The Lord teaches how a man may be perfectly good. But if men find their own lives not conformable to his teaching, is it not because they take another and imperfect standard, even if they do not walk according to the conventional Christianity of the day. It is said, the standard of Christ is never realised. At any one moment this standard may be a reality within us, the next transgressed. But, whosoever places before him this perfect standard, to be complete in Christ, will, when he finds himself a transgressor, though it be seventy times seven a day, seek restoration in *the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost*.

Whoever rejects or modifies this positive and emphatic teaching of the Lord, as contained in this verse, commits a heresy more pernicious than any other. It does not suppose our knowing every small commandment that might be given, but enforces the possession of that which would compel us to keep all. As James

says, Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. He who keeps the whole law, the *νομος*, fulfils it. So that the slightest departure would be to be in that condition wherein we are guilty of all. Nor is the teaching of John anywise but in accordance with this. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from *all unrighteousness*. Again, If we walk in the light, *as he is in the light*, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood—that is the life in which we have fellowship—of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.

How much half-hearted Christianity may be attributed to that teaching which argues from individual experience; and, then, like a visible, self-styled, infallible church, constitutes its doctrines accordingly. Again, how shall we understand the teaching of an eminent divine of the Reformation period, who says, “That the law of God requires from us a perfect and full obedience, that in no manner can it be satisfied?”—*Bishop Jewel*.

The further consideration of this subject is urged, not only because of its importance, but because men go out of the way to say, “It cannot be carried out.” How, then, to a people proverbial for dissoluteness of life, whose reigning sin was impurity—which, with other abominations, they were even bringing into their Christian state—could Paul say, I have espoused you as a chaste virgin to Christ? Only, as he said to others, whom he reproved for their spiritual adultery, Ye also are become dead to the law, that ye should be *married to another*, to him who is raised from the dead, that you should bring forth fruit unto God. This the Lord taught as he said, Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you. The Word reveals facts accomplished; not that we are to do something to make them such, but being what they are, we are not to put them from us, which we do when we take another standard than that which is. They are to be realised, and then we are accordingly pure, clean in the sight of God. The emphatic teaching of the Lord is, Ye are *now* clean through the Word. Abide in me, and I in you. Whoso, then, keepeth this Word is in Christ Jesus. He knows it, and the love of God is perfected in him.

It behoves all men to satisfy themselves what is the clear and

distinct teaching of the Spirit of God; for the world is pretentious, and especially the educated portion of it. It has a conventional code of life, which is opposed to the truth. Teachers of the truth of God are not "bound to the pre-conceived notions of those whom they exhort." Else what would become of the pulpit. It would be but the arena for the pride of life. And we should see in a greater degree what was in the civilised and cultivated city of Corinth: one saying, I am of Apollas, I of Cephas, I of Paul, and I of Christ. Would that men gave heed to the solemn warning of this verse, lest they be least in the kingdom, and so not of it.

Such a state of things is the cause of much sorrow of heart. Paul admonished men, lest they be corrupted from the simplicity which is in Christ. Satan comes as a messenger of light, as if sent by heaven. It is then no marvel that his ministers should come as ministers of righteousness, twisting the truth of God, that men are beguiled from the simplicity which is in Christ.

The words, "least in the kingdom of the heavens," are found in Matthew xi. 11, where the meaning is different, determined by the context. The Lord Jesus speaks with respect to those whom he addressed: they were resting in the law, making their boast of God, as a nation that did righteousness; they were resting in the shadows of the kingdom, in that which was outward; and so, being least in it, they were not of it; while he was great in it who possessed the substance and demonstrated it in his life.

While uttering these words, so pregnant with meaning, doubtless the well known incident in the life of Moses was not absent from his mind.

Every child knows that Moses was wrong in striking the rock. And because of his disobedience in this matter he must die—die to sin. It is not the question whether Moses may, or may not, have often exhibited such a spirit; but herein we see the spirit of the law without respect of persons. It was indeed God's judgment, for Moses could not enter the kingdom until he had first died.

Some, indeed, regard it with amazement, and dare ask, "Is it the decree of a God of mercy, truth, and justice?" No one could more truly acquiesce in it than Moses himself. He knew that until the old nature died, of which his own death was only the type, he could not enter the kingdom; and so, by his death, he

signally taught the truth he had for forty years been enforcing upon the children of Israel. He preferred at any time *the affliction* of the children of Israel (in its truest sense) to the pleasures of sin for a season. The error of Moses was generic—a resting in his own act to make the living water flow. It includes all others, even the highest type, that of Nicodemus—man doing, and God with him; instead of man crucified, and God doing. Moses should have spoken the word, and glorified the God of Israel.

What, indeed, was the lament of one holding the episcopal office longer than any of his contemporaries? Speaking of the present age, he says, “It was an age of movement; and the preacher, in his desire to keep pace with the prevailing excitement of the times, was tempted to abandon his own province; and instead of seeking to mould men’s minds, to guide popular opinions, he was content to become a pleaser of men, thus ceasing to be an ambassador of Christ, and become a follower of the ruling fancies of the day, instead of being a leader of public opinion, and a corrector of the world’s errors.”—*Bishop Sumner*. And he adds, after remarking the cause of diminution in the number of candidates for ordination, “There were, however, other and deeper causes at work which tended to dry up the springs which had hitherto supplied the church with ministers; and those causes had not escaped the notice of an acute writer in a recent publication. He had justly remarked that the strife, the extravagance, the treacherous disappointments, the oscillations of religious controversy by *teachers in the Church* itself, had acted upon young minds so powerfully, that they dared not devote themselves to the ministry.”

20. When we consider the Jews *as outwardly* testifying to the kingdom, and the Scribes and Pharisees as the wise and prudent among them, we are prepared for the solemn and emphatic exhortation of the Lord, I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, *ye shall in no case enter* into the kingdom of the heavens. The Scribes were the professed interpreters of the law; the Pharisees claimed to be the impersonation of the holiness it enforced. They were types of all who are strangers to the truth. The Lord, disregarding social distinctions, regards all as either righteous or unrighteous. In referring to these men, he takes the highest form of unrighteousness, and so shows clearly where truth and error are conterminous.

The Scribe might come to Christ, and, on being asked, How readest thou? correctly reply, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself. He has a true idea, not only of the righteousness of the law, but of the law of it, whereby only it is fulfilled. This do, and thou shalt live, says the Lord. Let the law of righteousness go forth in its operating principle; this is life, and the power of retaining it.

The term Pharisee is one taken by universal consent from a word signifying "separation." They measured themselves by themselves; compared themselves among themselves; but the Lord Jesus measured them by the one standard of God. These would appear to supply what the Scribe lacked, but their separation was not from sin, but from their fellow-men doing what was visibly wrong, or not doing in the discipline of their body what they imposed. Both these men witnessed to the great principles of the covenant, even as the Lord and his forerunner. But it was all outward. The divine testimony was, "They honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They seek me daily, delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness; forsake not the ordinances of their God; ask of me the ordinances of righteousness, and take delight in approaching to God." They would thank God that they were not as other men; no extortioners taking more than their due; not unjust in any of their dealings; no adulterers; fasting twice a week; practising self-denial; paying tithes of all they possess; keeping the Sabbath intact; praying continually; blamelessly observing all legal purifications, and abounding in alms-deeds. In all which they had a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge; they possessed not God in Christ Jesus, but their hearts were *far* from him. They went about establishing their own righteousness; the works of the law, that is, of the flesh; and had not, therefore, submitted to the righteousness of God. They could doubtless say with Paul, If any man thinketh he hath whereof to boast in the flesh, I more. To boast in the flesh would be of that only which, at its best, would be a counterfeit of the true. However, they being strangers to the cross of Christ—the way of righteousness—endeavoured, in that which should have been crucified, even the flesh in its highest cultivation, to outrun the precepts of

God. Then, we ask, Is it right to say, "the Pharisees' teaching contained elements of a more spiritual religion than the original Mosaic system?" Certainly not. Such a statement contradicts the words of Christ. The publican went to his home "accounted righteous rather than the Pharisee." He felt deeply that in himself was his great adversary; he felt that he required the truth to which the law witnessed; and surely this example is enough to show that there were elements of a more spiritual religion in the law, or any part of it, than in the whole system of the Pharisees.

Again, it is said that it was in the captivity that the Jewish people first learned that the spiritual part of worship could be separated from the ceremonial. Did they at all know what could be separated? For it was continually said of them, *They honour me with their lips, while their heart is far from me.*

There are those who rush to the other extreme, and say, Sin can be forgiven only by an adequate atonement, offered to the Divine Majesty; and that One was competent to appease incensed majesty, and satisfy offended justice. For one moment let us look at these vague, and, to some extent, unscriptural terms. Can it be said that sin is forgiven? Sin must be destroyed; the bitter root must be uprooted—must be taken away. Again, is it incensed majesty to be appeased? or, rather, is it not the Sovereignty of God vindicating itself in the overthrow of what is not of Him? The satisfaction which Jehovah requires is the banishing from the kingdom all things that offend, and so necessitating in every one all that is in Christ the Son of God.

The term justice is righteousness. It is said that to a forensic righteousness is added the gift of the Spirit, and that belief in this forensic righteousness is justification, which, with the gift of the Spirit, is said to constitute Christianity; while the cross, as an inward experience, demonstrated in the life, is ignored.

To crucify the flesh—to die to oneself—may, among other things, be incidentally taught; but, as the primary and all important element indispensable to the possession of the Spirit, according to the covenant, it is seldom taught. In no part of the Word of God can we find the death of Christ made to satisfy the exacting and avenging justice of God. It may be to satisfy his righteousness, and this only, as putting away all that is opposed

to it—the sin of the world—death—him that hath the power of it; slaying the enmity in the heart of man, and so reconciling the world to God.

The vicarious death of Christ was not to satisfy the justice, as such, of God. How could his becoming a curse do this? Upon what principle can an honest man, in becoming a robber, satisfy justice? But to make the Lord sin, and the transgressions of men to return back upon him as sin, and the holiness of God, in all its terrible reality, dealing with him, in order to put all away, is another thing. He suffered, the righteous for the unrighteous—he, the One with God, for them without God, that he might bring them to God. He became a curse—came under the dominion of death—that in holiness and righteousness he might purge away all that was adverse to truth. The testimony was in his being put to death in the flesh, and being made alive in the Spirit. So we are saved by the blood of his cross—the cross and the blood—the death and the life. He came not by water only, but by water and blood—a cleansing from sin, and a life to God. This is shed, poured out upon the world, for until this death took place, the Spirit could not come.

In repentance we come out of darkness—from sin, its power and dominion—and we enter into life. This life is our righteousness. Paul (Rom. iii. 22) puts Jesus before Christ, because there the idea of righteousness is the more prominent. Had it been redemption—the condition preceding—it would have been Christ Jesus. He is our *ἱλαστήριον*, propitiation, or mercy seat—the only place where Jehovah meets man. (Ex. xxv. 17, 22.) “To meet,” is rendered by the LXX. as making himself known: thus, indeed, God reveals himself. In the other passages in the Pentateuch where this word appears (Ex. xxix. 42; xxx. 36), it indicates how that the burnt offering takes place before the holy anointing. These principles of the kingdom have ever been the same. If a man walk with God, it must be in faith, perfect in his generations—in judgment and in righteousness. God is light, and in the possession of his righteousness we dwell in the light as he is in the light. God is love, and having his righteousness, we possess love as the operating principle of the divine nature.

How many, failing to apprehend the simple teaching of the great Prophet, run into endless mistakes about righteousness?

There is but one, and that is Jehovah himself. To possess him involves the putting away of everything that is not of him. Abraham believed him, *in all his covenant relation*, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. If this view of righteousness be rejected, then the objector must run a tilt with the Apostle, who says, He that doeth righteousness *is born of God*; and he that doeth not righteousness is not born of God: herein is manifested the children of God, and the children of the devil. (1 John ii. 29; iii. 10.)

Abraham put off the body of the flesh—not one member only, but the corrupt stream altogether, of which circumcision *was the sign*. He possessed, also, the righteousness of God, of which circumcision *was the seal*. He was in the full blessings of the covenant; and so, according to God, he gave expression to them. Speaking of Abraham, let us turn for one moment to the Epistle to the Galatians, and see how the Apostle therein confutes the false teachers who were working insidiously among them. Abraham was the type of the Father, in whom alone all the families of the earth were blessed. Therefore, to Abraham and his seed was the promise made; not to seeds, however honoured and distinguished, but to One seed, and that is Christ. The covenant, from the first, was confirmed of God in Christ. Until man puts on Christ, he cannot inherit the sonship, and all it involves. Where the cross of Christ is, there the promise follows. Then, if they had begun in the Spirit—begun to realise the promise—the flesh is already crucified; how, then, can they be perfected in the flesh?

Abraham, as the type of the Father, brought up his children and household after him, to keep the way of Jehovah—to do righteousness and judgment. This is the birth-right of all men; then let us not part with it for a mess of pottage.

Justification is an ecclesiastical phrase, suggested by the word condemnation. The word rendered justification should be "*made righteous*." What can be a greater evidence of the ignorance of the original, when, on the one side, it is interpreted as including works, and on the other as excluding them, even by men with high academical distinctions? They see not righteousness, and its natural outcoming, as the sap emptying itself into fruit, but

adopt an ecclesiastical phrase, for which there is no warrant of Scripture.

Justification is made righteous, and if this were clearly set forth as the condition in which a righteous Father, through the work of the Son, and the operation of the Holy Ghost, has placed all men, it would be seen that there was no exclusive ground in the love of God, but that righteousness was the law of our being, and if we possessed it not, then we *kept down the truth* in unrighteousness. Paul, after showing how that Christ was delivered because of our offences, and raised again because of our being made righteous, states how that which was universal is individually realised by faith; and the result of this indwelling righteousness is, that the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. There is no mistaking his meaning as he explains, Christ died for us, and we are made righteous through his blood; which he further explains as he argues, If reconciled through his death, that is, being crucified with him—so dead to sin; how much more so, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

Faith, then, is the appropriation of Christ, the Son of God. It is remarkable how the simple formulæ of Paul and John are overlooked—*εν* and *εις*, are characteristic of them respectively. John has *εις εμε* (xvii. 20) into me. This may be traced throughout his Gospel. Thus only are we made one with the Father and with the Son. Paul, before Agrippa, testified that the Lord sent him to turn men from darkness into light—from the power of Satan unto God, whereby they obtained forgiveness, and an inheritance among them which are sanctified by or in faith, which is *εις εμε*, into me. (Acts xxvi. 18.) Similar construction (xxiv. 24)—“concerning the faith *into* Christ.” Paul generally uses *εν*, as *in* Christ Jesus—the true and only foundation of man. And he taught that this righteousness was revealed *from* faith *into* faith, that is, from Christ into Christ. We have no stock of faith. So, then, the living stones, built upon the one foundation, are one with it. He thus describes faith, “which is in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. iii. 13): Reckon yourselves to be dead, indeed, unto sin, but alive unto God *in* Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom. vi. 11.) There is, then, no condemnation to them that are *in* Christ Jesus: we are one body *in* Christ—nothing shall separate us from

the love of God, which is *in* Christ Jesus. So, then, if we be *in* Christ Jesus, we possess the Spirit of life, and the law of the Spirit works in us. Ignore the cross of Christ, then whatever we may do, it is only of the flesh. It may take the form of praying, doctrine, looking for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, according to the various idiosyncrasies of men, and it is only of the flesh. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation : all things are become new. We were created in Christ Jesus unto good works : we fell in Adam : we are brought back in the last Adam, in whom we are to realise a new creation : to put off the old man, and then to put on the new, created after God in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Since righteousness is Christ Jesus in us, and we in him, we shall find that the Sermon on the Mount *enforces the manifestation of him* in purifying ourselves as he is pure—being righteous as he is righteous. It is the subject of the sermon from beginning to end, and runs a tilt with all who obey not the truth ; and not unfrequently provokes the bitter animosity of the uncrucified heart, that cannot endure so holy a standard. *Then, let no man deceive you,* says John. He that doeth righteousness is righteous as he is righteous : and thus only do we enter the kingdom, possessing a righteousness that exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, and in a holy love in Christ Jesus fulfil all righteousness, so fulfil the law.

If we bear in mind that we were created in Christ Jesus unto good works ; that, as we have already stated, the whole human family stood to God in the relation represented by the woman to the man—possessing that which was derived from him, even his rib, so expressing the wondrous truth of our relation to God, and made in his likeness, even as we were created in the image, *εικων*, implying derivation—and likeness—*ὁμοιωσις*, similitude—of God, that we might be filled with the fulness of God, *then we were in Adam* before God holy, and without blame in love.

But in the fall Satan planted in man what was of himself, that fallen Adam should lust after the creature in whatever form he might present himself, or by whatever bauble he might allure him. But now Christ is come, and has restored all things, therefore the sin of the world is put away, mankind cleansed, that every

man might know how to possess *his vessel*, not, indeed, in the lust of concupiscence, but in sanctification and in honour.

In Christ Jesus all things are restored, that every man may in Christ, in the last Adam, be unblameable in holiness, and in the Spirit of the Son abound in love, irreproveable before God.

21. We now come to the consideration of all that is opposed to this holiness and this love, which is the law of righteousness; of all that is opposed to the fulfilling of the law, and so of the fulfilling of all righteousness. And we may here ask, in respect to what follows, Why does the Lord confine himself to two, and only two, of the commandments—the sixth and the seventh? Because, where holiness is not, there is a murderer; and where righteousness is not, there is harlotry—a cleaving to the creature, minding earthly things. (Is. i. 21.)

It is of little moment what form evil may take, the root is one and the same. He that is angry with his brother without cause, is in danger of the judgment, even as he who kills. This is no new truth. The Father has revealed himself from the beginning, though the Jew knew him not. The Lord Jesus, having put away sin, and brought in an everlasting righteousness, goes forth exhibiting its law, its operating principle from the heart, and of which the Jew was destitute. He who kills is in danger of the judgment. When the covenant was established with Noah—a covenant with all flesh—the slaying of our brother, created in the image of the one Father, was referred to. The judgment then commanded would have been executed upon Cain, only that was spared to exhibit the truth in its deeper meaning—that of a more terrible judgment—for he went forth a vagabond and an outcast. He was, then, the expression of a greater death than any that could be inflicted by the hand of man—a separation from the presence of the Father, a separation and desolation worse than annihilation.

The Lord, in showing the identity of inconsiderate anger with murder, lifts the veil of the human heart, and shows the true condition of the wrong-doer. Such an one has not righteousness, knowing not the way of it.

The language of the Lord implies a common brotherhood, according to the covenant, which is realised only in Christ, by putting off the corrupt and selfish nature; for if we say we have

fellowship with the Father and Jesus Christ, his Son, and walk in darkness, we lie, and *do not the truth*.

Whosoever, then, shall be angry with his brother without a cause, is in danger of the judgment of God; all outward judgments are such, as against evil, and attest a still greater judgment against sin and all unrighteousness—then are we identified with evil, for if we break a tittle of the divine law we are guilty of the whole. Whosoever shall say, Vain, empty fellow! by which he not only provokes his *brother*, but despises the family of God, is in danger of the council—of being excommunicated, so of being cast out, instead of being received into everlasting habitations. And he who says, Thou fool! is in danger of Gehenna: like a malefactor cast into the Valley of Hinnom, a loathsome mass for the fire and the worm to remove. In this threefold form the Lord Jesus painfully portrays the effect of unrestrained anger—the breaking of a tittle of the divine law—and how it goes on its way, not only despite the mercy and love of God, but also, notwithstanding his visitations against evil, notwithstanding the influence of the true Church, in giving such an one over for a time to Satan for the destruction of the flesh; and, yet more, despite the awful condition of separation and corruption, as represented by Gehenna and the scavengers of that corruption doing their work. The Lord Jesus could see the act from the beginning to the end, and in this threefold form of condemnation would intensify it. We know not how great a matter a little fire kindleth. So, then, if we can master our tongues, we can keep under our whole bodies, even as the helmsman turns the ship whithersoever he will. And this only in Christ. But if we love not him whom we have seen, how shall we love him whom we have not seen?

23, 24. Men are brethren, for there is a common Father. We may change, but he does not. If, then, any would recognise him, and forget the common brotherhood: Yea, if they would bring their gift to the altar, and there remember that a brother hath ought against them, &c. In these words, the idea in the Lord's mind is apparent. The altar is almost universally the representation of holiness. So the Lord uses it (xxiii. 35); while the gift is the expression, the outcoming of the law of righteousness. So no man should come before the Father professing holiness and love, yet be at variance with his brother. It is impossible. Such a

thing is a paradox. Therefore is he to leave his gift at the altar, and go his way, and be first reconciled to his brother. He must first put on Christ, and let the law of righteousness work. Until he does this, that offering cannot be the expression of a true heart. What are a brother's claims? What should they be? What will meet them but a holy love—the law of righteousness? The gift at the altar is an offering in righteousness; but how shall we offer to God if our brother hath ought against us? Do we not come before him with a lie in our right hand? Cain and Abel, types of all men, came before God, each with his offering. The Lord had *respect unto Abel* and his offering. It was the outcoming of what was within, which it expressed. In the slain animal was the death of the carnal nature. It expressed Abel crucified, dead with Christ, redeemed from the bondage of a corrupt and sinful nature. Therefore had Jehovah respect unto him and his offering. *In faith* he offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that *he was righteous*—God testifying of his gift. And he, through it, or by it, having died, yet speaketh. Cain failed to realise this death; and although he might come with the oil, the corn, and wine—offer the best fruit *of the creature*, the works of the flesh, and doubtless imagined he loved his brother, yet, when he found that his brother's offering was a more excellent one, he became angry without a cause, and slew his brother.

The Lord Jesus, then, does not teach that we shall not sin, but that, when we transgress, break a tittle of the divine law, we are guilty of the whole, and God, in his holiness, is our adversary. Who, then, should hesitate to obey the Lord's teaching? Agree with thine adversary quickly. We come pretending to have received the grace of God, and would give expression to it by our gifts, yet strangers *to the cross of Christ and the law of righteousness*. Men do not see what lurks within their heart. It was at the beginning of the world's history that all that we hear of two brothers—types of all men—was that the enmity rose up against him who, by the mighty hand of God, had slain it. God is holy, and hates sin. Not to be reconciled to our brother is to be the slave of sin and death. There must be, as the law of our being, an unselfish love, whatever be the return. Self-deceived, man asks, "How can I wish evil to my fellow-creature? Is thy servant

a dog that he should do this? How can I be opposed to God, or God be my adversary?" Such see not, within themselves, sin uncrucified; therefore, with them, *its manifestation is only a matter of degree*, and their *best* efforts will be, or can be, only to make God such an one as themselves, to make him agree with them, to make light darkness, righteousness unrighteousness, to annihilate the throne of heaven, and the source of all blessing.

God, then, in all the majesty of his holiness, is my adversary. How shall I agree with him?—not he with me, but I with him. The only way is the cross a reality within. Who, then, is the judge? Christ, in all the holiness of Jehovah. Who the officer? The angels—*holy* angels. Holiness is their perfection, their especial characteristic, and so distinguishes them from the fallen ones. They are the representatives of this most glorious perfection of the Almighty, wherein they excel in strength, doing his will. Love may be the law of their being, but we know them only as the opponents of all unrighteousness. Therefore they can have no sympathy with fallen and depraved man. He is not the object of their solicitude. But when we take our position in Christ, are invested with our true dignity, belong to the kingdom, then are they our ministering spirits. Therefore, if we agree not with our adversary while in the way—we pause to remark this merciful intimation, that so long as we are here, the Father is waiting for us to agree with him; but delay is death, present and future—they cast us into prison. They must do so. The moment the soul departs the opportunity for agreeing is past for ever, and it is in the prison, the φυλακη—which to the Jew was a place of fearful restraint. It is opposed to Paradise, or Abraham's bosom. These two parts constitute Hades, or the invisible condition of all awaiting the final severance of the clean from the unclean, the righteous from the unrighteous, the holy from the unholy. Thus, the great Teacher of mankind shows how, if we agree not quickly with our adversary, we rush on to everlasting condemnation.

Men cannot shake off the consciousness of God's presence. He is, in his nature, a consuming fire to all who are opposed to him, but, by his presence, he is ever calling them to be at one with him, and so at peace. He has redeemed the world, reconciled it to himself, therefore, it is within the power of every man

to agree with him. The Lord must necessarily be man's adversary so long as he will not agree with the truth, not in a mere mental assent, but in a condition of soul.

If there be one Father, we are brethren in one Spirit through Christ, and nothing should be allowed to jar this relation. Let us not, then, with any overweening conceit, try the claims of another, but rather hasten to prove that we are true brothers, and that none has ought against us. Owe no man anything, but to love one another, for love is the fulfilling of the law.

26. This is no arbitrary decree. The Lord here intimates that it is not the will of the Father that any should perish. He would, if he could, deliver his creature from so terrible a hereafter, but he cannot. If, in time, we despise the waiting, patient, considerate, unfailing love of God, how can we agree with him when holiness is vindicating itself against all that is opposed to the righteousness of God? Thus, on the one hand, eternal damnation is not of God; on the other, no man can say that love will manifest itself at the expense of holiness. If it were so, both would be destroyed. If a man, then, reject the only reconciliation, how will he ever come out of that condition which, by its own inherent law, determines the future? As the first step to righteousness, our depraved nature must be crucified, we must obey the truth—put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and then put on the new man created after God, in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

27. We now make a further step in the way of life. In the sight of him who sees not as man sees, there is no difference in the outward act and the cherished desire, for the desire is the incipient act, the undeveloped germ, which circumstances, or the lack of opportunity, may sometimes prevent exhibiting itself. And speaking of breaking an iota or tittle of the law, as the angry word, or the carnal look of desire, the Lord takes the ground of man. But with him there is no such thing as the iota or tittle of the law, for every man, in respect of any given moment, is either in the flesh and following it, or in the Spirit and led by it.

Marriage is a holy institution, and signifies the spiritual union; that as man and wife are one flesh, so God and man are one Spirit in the Lord. Adultery has also its mystic signification;

so that fleshly impurity is closely allied to spiritual adultery—the great sin of Israel.

The Jews, by a visible redemption and a visible presence, were taught the invisible truths of the kingdom, likewise, wherein consisted their true blessedness—in the going up to the full enjoyment of their privileges, which they, with some exceptions, rejected. Jehovah says, I have wooed thee with an everlasting love. Again, Thy Maker is thy husband. Again, reproving them for their great sin, he says, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? She is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there played the harlot. (Jer. iii. 6, 8, 13.) Turn, O backsliding children, saith Jehovah; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion. Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith Jehovah.

It was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery. It is evident, both from the frequency of polygamy, and the nature of the precepts in the Pentateuch, that the Jews, in their tendencies, were not in advance of their heathen neighbours. However, their condition was made subservient to the truths of the kingdom; whereby, as in every circumstance of their life, they were taught, continually, those truths. The Lord Jesus teaches that, in the connexion between the desire and the act, spiritual adultery or transgression does not necessarily consist in some outward act, but in the condition of the heart. The body is dead because of sin, but Satan is ever, by his importunities, troubling *the widowed* soul—such an one is a believer; so, then, when the soul is yielded up to him, sin revives, and if it be not at once purged away, it is spiritual adultery. Here was Paul's struggle—the temptation was to return to the flesh, wherein he could boast more than any man. But he who knows not the law is a fornicator—he understands nothing of the marriage union with God. A wife knows when her whole heart is her husband's; so, then, he who obeys the truth knows what it is to set his affections on things above, to find his life in God with Christ, and to avoid every snare and allurement to sin against God.

In this plain and simple statement of the Lord, there is no wresting, no perverting of the Scriptures, in order to adapt them to the modes of modern thought. If we are agreed with our adversary, we must not turn back to the flesh. No circumstance can be an excuse. The truth is paramount. If we break a tittle of the law, if we lust for anything of the creature, it is spiritual adultery, a forsaking of the living God.

It is said of the Pharisees, that they condemned overt acts; so do most men; but they ventured not to deal with the heart of man. It is natural for the depraved nature to lust for the flesh; but, if we agree with our adversary, the flesh is crucified, and the soul is cleansed, and the Spirit is the Lord's. Then, we cannot allow the desire to arise, nor in anywise spare the flesh, lest we commit spiritual adultery against God.

In this teaching of Jesus, much light is thrown upon the character of David, in his relation to the kingdom. He was a king, a man after God's own heart, which every man should be, and what every Christian must be—a king and a priest unto God, overcoming all his enemies, and possessing the fulness of God. It was in Christ only that David was king. In his experience, he foresaw the Lord always before him. He was on his right hand, so that he should not be moved. His heart rejoiced, his tongue was glad, and *his flesh rested in hope*. Failing, however, to keep his heart with all diligence, tempted, the desire of the flesh was quickened, and he fell. He was then both *a murderer and an adulterer*, and his outward acts gave testimony to him as such. He had slain his spiritual life, and turned again to his carnal nature, and brought forth unto sin. And when the veil of self-deception, which had rested upon him for about twelve months, was removed, he regarded not the outward form of manifestation. He saw himself a spiritual murderer, and a spiritual adulterer, and confessed, saying, I have sinned against the Lord, and prayed, "Give me a clean heart, O God, and renew within me a righteous Spirit." And where was the difference between the trembling Isaac and the terror-stricken king? Did they not both ignore the cross?—to which both particularly and prominently testified according to the economy of grace. Isaac, having built again the things he had destroyed, was in the flesh, and, so, would bless the old nature. The king, laying aside his kingly

character, was overcome, and thus we may read, in their visible acts, their inward transgression. Hence the Apostle so powerfully sets it before us, "For this, ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God"—kingdom of God and his righteousness, the burden of the Sermon on the Mount.

29, 30. The unwavering resolution of the Christian is to know nothing among men save Christ Jesus; or, if it be more emphatically stated, Jesus Christ and him crucified. Then, how are we to understand the Lord's words in these verses? He has shown how the covenant is transgressed, and how that every sinful word is a witness that we are not in the covenant, and so are spiritual murderers and spiritual adulterers. In the former, the flesh overcomes; in the latter, the spiritual nature turns from God to the flesh, and is defiled. He now speaks of the eye and of the hand. By the former he respects adultery; by the latter, murder. But does he intend us to pluck out the eye?—to cut off the hand? Should we be better if we did? Certainly not. Then, what does he mean? Why does he speak of the right eye and the right hand? Does he not imply, in the use of these terms, man's condition in the covenant of God? Does he not by them remind us of that condition, and our obligation to make it effective? The eye is a favourite image of the soul for light; but, instead of receiving this blessing, it goes after the creature, and thus we have "eyes full of adultery." The *right* eye shows its connexion with the right hand. This is ever representative of power—the mighty hand—the redeeming hand of Jehovah. He is on our right hand, that we should not be moved. How, then, shall we be murderers with it? Thus, the right eye and the right hand should ever remind us of the covenant blessing. But for them to be a cause of scandalizing us—of removing us from our Christian position—should be to arouse in us the utmost indignation and vehement desire to clear ourselves, in crucifying, not one member only, but the whole body, that it may be full of light. And, further, in this imagery, he reminds us that we can rectify ourselves only by the cross, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, allowing no deterioration of the truth, or imperfect standard of life; for we know that the slightest departure places us in the

whole power of the enemy ; therefore must we, at once, deal with that within us that would vitiate our redemption and blessing.

31, 32. We are here incidentally taught how to interpret the Scriptures. Marriage is a divine institution, and is intended to keep before our minds the oneness and union with God. But such was the depravity of the Jew, and so demoralized was he, in the infancy of the national life, that he would have ignored marriage altogether, had not Moses permitted him, for other causes than the one of fornication, to divorce his wife. But, had he the law of righteousness, he would have understood how that marriage was dissolved but by one only act, and that it was so *de facto*.

We are admonished to agree with God, and if we do so, we are in union with him, and he does not put us away but for spiritual fornication. If, then, the Jews were allowed to give a bill of divorcement, otherwise than for fornication, *it was a testimony to the hardness of their hearts*. For, if the outward was to be a witness to the inward and spiritual, it must be confined to this fleshly impurity. In our legal administration we adopt the practice of the Jews of old ; and, in doing so, we perceive not how that by removing the marks of this distinctive witness, we are ignoring the principles of the covenant.

The social bond, though typical of the union between God and man, is used to express other unions—as that between the flesh and Spirit. (Rom. vii. 1—5.) The husband is the old and carnal nature—the old man ; the wife—the soul, set free by the death of the old man, through the body of Christ ; so that, in him, the soul, being united to him who is the resurrection life, might bring forth fruit unto God. (Rom. vii. 4, & viii. 10.)

The figurative language of Scripture is not stereotyped ; writers are independent, and, as masters, they play their variations. They may refer to the social bond—to man and wife, or to the union of body and soul, or to the relation of God and man. The wife is put away only for fornication or adultery. Sin must be crucified ere the flesh can resume its proper place—be subject in all things to the divine in man.

God puts us away only for fornication. We live to sin—we know him not. It is for us, then, to put off the flesh, and if Christ be in us, the body is dead because of sin. But if we put

it off for any other cause, or by any other means than by Christ crucified, we cause it to commit fornication. The great importance of this simple teaching, at first sight, is hardly seen. It is hypocrisy—it is not what it appears to be. All efforts short of the truth defeat their end. All voluntary humility—sitting in ashes and sackcloth, fasting, &c., cannot be put in the place of a deep conviction of sin—of separation from God. It is a causing of the flesh to commit fornication. True humility is not in shame, but in the *casting down* of everything that would exalt itself against the knowledge of God. We are now prepared for the further truth, that he who marries her that is rightly divorced, committeth adultery. Having put on Christ, we are no longer in the flesh, or wedded to the flesh, but one with the Spirit. If, then, the desires of the flesh arise, and we are one again with the carnal mind, we commit adultery; we build again the things which, through Christ, we have destroyed. Here is no stock of holiness, nor is there indefectibility; for though we may have been, like David, men after God's own heart, yet, yielding to the flesh, we commit spiritual adultery.

How many having, during the first ten or twenty years of their life, sown to the flesh, and, afterwards, having obeyed the truth, find that sowing bearing its fruit—a thorn in the flesh buffeting the soul. The truth requires a sensitive consciousness of evil, and an unceasing watchfulness against its power. The terrible conflict, or agony, is in the inner man—on the platform of the heart. And when iniquity rushes in like a flood, the Spirit lifts up a banner against it. And although this be our experience, yet during this life we are in continual and closest proximity to all that is opposed to God. Then, instead of putting forth the prayer of Saul to be honoured before men, let us deal with evil at the root. Saul had much power and command, stature and appearance, generous feeling, and reverence for religion, yet he was not a man after God's own heart. Evil ever struggles for supremacy. It is a fearful antagonist. He, then, who grapples with it, must do so though it be to the putting asunder of body and soul. To have regard to God's approval and his honour should be the great work of life: if we do not, we are *ipso facto* spiritually divorced. *Απολυω* is, in the fullest sense, a separation. It is the declaration, “divortium a vinculo.” Paul had a distinct

apprehension of two antagonistic laws working within. By the operation of the one he was set free from the other. If, then, we know not Christ, and are not made conformed to his death—possess Christ formed within us—we shall come under the humiliating description given by the prophet of Israel, “Go up every high hill, and under every green tree, and play the harlot.” But if we be as Paul says, *in* the Lord Jesus Christ; or, as John says, believe *into* the Lord Jesus Christ, the answer within to the solicitations of sin must be, “How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God.”

33—37. The Lord again points to the law, and intimates the degraded condition of them of old time. It would be of little value to ascertain what were the habits and customs of men who failed to realise what would be their distinguished privilege to know. They may, with a dread of the name of Jehovah, have sworn by his throne, or by Jerusalem, or their own heads, and other things; but the Lord selects those by which he points out how they failed to realise the all-important truth of the covenant, “I am always with thee.” And so long as they put him far from them, though they might draw near with their lips, they were only *murderers and adulterers*. He exhorts us to let our conversation be—Yea, yea; Nay, nay. We should, indeed, sadly fail in apprehending the mind of the Lord, if we isolated this portion of his teaching, and considered it as a precept regarding oaths in the administration of justice, or otherwise. For he adds, *Whatsoever is more than this cometh of evil*. If we ignore the presence of Jehovah—of the Father and his kingdom, we must take his name in vain: being destitute of the righteousness of Jehovah, we cannot cry Abba, Father.

Swearing is allowed. The verb שבע (in the niph'al, made to swear; and in the hiph'il, came to swear,) implies the obligation to realise God, and is derived from the substantive שבע, seven, denoting the covenant. Therefore, swearing, causing to swear, or making to swear, was an outward testimony to the presence of God; and it would be a taking of the name in vain if it regarded the presence as outward, and not inward.

To swear *righteously* is to swear that he liveth in truth—in judgment and righteousness, according to the covenant—and so in us, as we put away our abominations out of his sight, and we

bless ourselves in him. (Jer iv. 1, 2.) Remarkable verses!—every word full of meaning! And so it is said, The king shall rejoice in God; and every one that sweareth by him shall glory. (Ps. lxiii. 11.)

The Lord now attests the truth. What constitutes a temple but Jehovah enthroned in judgment and righteousness? It is the Lord's idea, which corresponds with that of the Law and the Prophets. It is the fulfilment of both. (Lev. xix. 12: Jer. iv. 1, 2: Ps. lxiii. 11.) He, therefore, refers to the universe as one vast temple. Heaven is his throne, earth his footstool. He then passes on to Jerusalem, the city of the great King, who is there enthroned, reigning in righteousness; and now he refers to their head, and who spiritually is their head but Christ?—the true temple of God, whom possessing, they have Jehovah in all the fulness of God—in judgment and in righteousness.

Then must we realise the presence of Jehovah, not externally, but internally; and these simple monosyllables will be *the expression* of the truth, and carry with them the savour of God; for if we do the truth, our works are *wrought in him*. Thus, the teaching of Jesus marvellously reaches forth to every state and condition of man, and in all majestic simplicity attests the most ineffable mystery—God in us thinking, willing, speaking, doing. Then we possess the righteousness that exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees. Alas! where is there in religious, social, commercial life, that implicit mutual confidence, that child-like simplicity, which the words of Jesus signify, and which the truth demands? Only pull off the mask—the varnish and veneer of hypocrisy; strip men of their social order, and conventional position—of the circumstances of life—and where, then, is the difference? Men hate the cross: they are not found in holy watchfulness, or returning when drawn away. In some subtle and specious form of selfishness, though they may adopt the *literal* teaching of Christ, they ignore the presence of Jehovah.

38. "To the ancients," is now dropped. Does the Lord thereby signify that the ancient people, in the hardness of their heart, being so far removed from righteousness itself, could not be taught the law of it? Is not this the lament of Paul, as he notices the folly of his countrymen in following after the law of righteousness by the works of the flesh?

The Lord Jesus now takes another step in unfolding the truths of his kingdom. If we possess righteousness, we must possess its law—its operating principle as the law of our life—else we are nothing.

While the idea that the pulpit is but the echo of the opinions of the hour is repudiated, the traditions of men are followed. We have just heard the people exhorted to a speculative belief in an historical fact, as constituting their acceptance with God. It is a practical faith alone that makes each one accepted, when a holy love works attesting the truth. Man is saved by the answer of a good conscience in God. The law of righteousness, as the operating power, the informing soul of all he does, alone can give this witness. This will follow where Christ crucified is; else how can I say, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath set me free from the law of sin and death?

Where could the Lord, in setting forth the different phases, or stages, of this righteousness, find material more simple, more expressive, or more universal, embracing all conditions of men, than that which he uses to illustrate them? And thus are we, who claim to teach the most sublime realities, taught, by the great Teacher of mankind, how to convey, even to the most contracted intellect, those glorious realities in which every child of man has an abiding and unlimited interest.

If the glorious reward offered to every man be “the crown of righteousness”—to be a king unto God, for ever reigning in righteousness, how shall we be meet for this if righteousness, which ever acts according to its own law, be not now our possession—the great principle of our life? Might there not have been among those whom the Lord addressed some who, possessing the feelings of a common humanity, would have hesitated to put in force the law of retaliation? Then were they superior to the commandment? Even with such a disposition there may be swelling pride, overweening conceit, overbearing arrogance. However love, the law of righteousness, stands in contrast to the law of retaliation. It can find no pleasure, no satisfaction in the sufferings of another. It bears, it endures, and knows full well that he who does a wrong is, in the privation of this inestimable blessing, a greater sufferer than he who endures the wrong.

The Lord enjoins that we resist not evil. Christianity cannot

take the attitude of the wrong-doer, which is implied in the term resist. Men have recourse to blows, and knock out the eye or tooth. Then, if one is thus assailed, is he not to resist? Under no provocation—under no circumstance whatever, is he to forsake his own ground for that of his opponent: moreover, the law of the Spirit of life is not vindicated by carnal weapons; the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God—the law of which will manifest itself, not by resisting evil, but by an irrefragable proof in rising superior to it—putting all evil under our feet.

To resist evil is to strengthen it. If evil works in another, let us manifest the principles of the covenant in a holy and unselfish love, for the eternal well-being of another is of greater value than this life of ours. And our eternal life maintains its purity in a holy exercise. However, if our best efforts fail, then we must leave them to Jehovah. Who does not know the value of mutual confidence in all the transactions of life, and the pleasure therein? Yet this Spirit of love, who would persuade men into this confidence, is, through overweening avarice, covetous greed, disregarded.

They take your coat, but do not you lose your reward. In your patience possess your soul, and let them take your cloak also. Take not the ground of the wrong-doer, but stand on the high vantage ground of Christian experience in the power of the law of righteousness. It is no violation of it when a transgressor does not go unpunished. If this be the only check, or power of restraining him, then it must be applied. If the very cogent arguments of a holy love fail, then social restraints must be imposed, and thus, so long as he lives, an outward law has dominion over him. He is a slave, and thus evil oppresses him.

41. Here, indeed, is one of the severest tests of this law. The Lord doubtless alludes to the Samaritans as couriers, who were enabled to impress into the service *of the power they served* those who entertained towards them, on account of their religious prejudices, the most implacable hatred. How many serving sin thus strive to oppress the believer? If, then, such an enemy take you from your lawful pursuits, and compel you to go with him one mile, go with him twain. Do this rather than lose the blessing you enjoy. Yea, more: the object of your life is not to

resist evil, but to manifest the grace of God, which bringeth salvation to all men. Therefore, give to him that asketh thee. This will be no promiscuous or spasmodic charity, but rather the image of God reflected in the life—silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I unto thee. What a great and inestimable gift he has, and is capable of bestowing, even as Peter did, to another, who stands in all the blessings of the covenant. Again, true love never takes pleasure in unrighteousness—will never provoke to wrong. Hence, the Lord did not turn the other cheek. In true love he did not suffer, much less provoke, the miserable wrong-doer to repeat that indignity to his sacred person. Give, and from him that would borrow turn not away. Let the law of righteousness come forth; let it well up with overflowing joy. God commended his love to us while we were sinners, and spared not his Son, but gave him up for all, and with him has freely given us all things; therefore, let there be no diminution of that active self-sacrificing love.

43, 44. The moral code of Jesus infinitely excels those of the wisest of men. He inculcated the law of righteousness as the informing soul of all. He places us upon his own ground. He shows us what is righteousness, how it must work, and what hinders it.

Every man is our neighbour. We must not thrust him from us. We are all brethren; then should we be at one, children of one Father. It is the law of unrighteousness to be selfish. If the Father gave the Son to be a curse, and, with him, freely gave us all things, then should we be ready, like the good Samaritan, to give our twopence—to lay down our life for the brethren, and let go forth, in all its fulness, the divine blessing. Men, in unrighteousness, thrust their neighbour from them; in righteousness, they lay down their life for him. If, then, we possess this righteousness, and the law of it works, we shall find that as resisting evil is the strength of sin, so the returning good for evil is the strength of the law of righteousness.

Whence spring all the mistrustful fears and painful uncertainties? They would have no existence if men would only ascend the hill of the Lord, and dwell in his holy tabernacle. Unless the divine love be the law of our lives, we are not in the kingdom of the heavens, we are not the children of God, and the sun

in the heavens reproves us. It shines upon the evil and the good ; and the rain descends upon the righteous and unrighteous. The sun is the source of light, and never ceases to give it forth. Whatever be the theory of the dark mass, or photosphere surrounding it, it is a glorious orb from which light is ever streaming forth.

This light is the true emblem of love. And since the Father is light, and in him is no darkness at all, love beams forth as the true law of his being, even to all men. If the Son reveal the Father in us, and we follow him, we shall never see darkness, for we shall be bathed in the ocean of divine love. But the world loves darkness better than light, and the Son of Man mournfully exclaims, O, righteous Father, the world doth not know thee, but I know thee. He revealed him, as he testified, saying, He that hath seen me, hath not seen me, but him that sent me. And if this be our blessed experience, we shall let our light so shine before men that they, beholding our good works, will glorify our Father which is in the heavens.

In these verses we are reminded of the prophet's words, that Christ should be as the shadow of a great rock in a *barren and thirsty* land, where no water is. Without the spiritual rain our God is a consuming fire. Christ is this rain—he breaks up the house of bondage, he disengages the life which the sun draws forth. Without rain, the sun renders the ground barren and parched. But Christ, having put away sin, having cleansed us, he now, as the Sun of Righteousness, imparts his blessing.

The Epistles are commentaries on the Lord's teaching. Taking that to the Ephesians, we must not regard what is written as precepts. If we do, we miss the revelation of the Word. In the first three chapters Paul makes known the eternal purpose of the Father, according to his own will revealed in Christ. In the fourth chapter he infers that they, whom he addressed, had learned Christ, and knew the truth as it is in Jesus—had put off the old man and put on the new, created after God in righteousness and holiness of the truth. Then, after setting forth, in the fulness of an overflowing heart, stupendous glorious truth, does he come down to mere precepts—to the mere letter? Rather does he not ground the obligation of truth, speaking upon the fact that we are members one of another?—that we should ever

make known the great principle of brotherhood in Christ, and not again identify ourselves with the corrupt and selfish nature which we have put off.

Be ye angry, and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath. Anger is at all times a dangerous weapon, for it is easy to pass from righteous into unrighteous anger. He warns us not to let the sun go down upon it. He would tell us that we may be angry so long as the sun shines, or, rather, so long as we are in God—that is, his love is the moving principle. To let the sun go down upon it is to have wrath in darkness and not in light. Then what a mighty principle is anger in divine love, for it regards only evil in its hostility to the truth.

If the sun go down upon our wrath—if the love of God be not the directing power, is it not giving place to the devil? Let him that stole steal no more. Is this a mere precept? What says God by Malachi? Does God defraud man? Can the Spirit defraud? He who defrauds is in the flesh, and he who is so, is a far greater robber than in the outward act, for he robs God. Then who is the greater liar, he who lies to man, or he who continues in the flesh, unreconciled to his adversary—the holiness of God, giving the lie to the gracious truth to which all nature and all intelligent beings testify? Again, let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth. Is this to be resolved into a mere prohibition of filthy talking? No; he regards all, even gentlemanly conversation, only as corrupt and corrupting when it proceeds from the corrupt source. It cannot tend to the building up, to the edifying of the Church of God, and minister grace to the hearers.

All the obligations of life are moral; they are not positive commands, springing from the arbitrary will of a lawgiver, but moral, arising from the very nature of things. So then, if we love our enemy, keep the Sabbath, or partake of the Lord's Supper, it will be not because of a positive command, but the expression—the outcoming of a reality within.

48. This exhortation of the Lord Jesus is dismissed by some as an impossibility. We would ask those who do so, how they would interpret the preceding passages? But if they follow the teaching of Christ as a connected whole, they have no alternative but to accept his words.

It was a true saying of the Pelagians, "That it is possible for a man to be perfect, else Christ must be supposed to command an impossibility." Men, judging from their own experience, may say, "You cannot attain to this"—their standard of life being no higher than *their own* attainments. If this command be modified, and be called a kind of perfection, such as was attained by David in respect to Saul and Absalom, or by Stephen, as he prayed for his murderers, and a lower standard be taken than that of Christ in us, we admit a principle by which the Scriptures are, and may be perverted and wrested from their true meaning.

Let no man say, I thank God I have not committed spiritual adultery, or spiritual murder. Men do say this, because the high standard of perfection, as taught by Christ, and in every part of the Word of God, is not received. If we do truth—that is, truth working in us, we are holy as he is holy; we are righteous as he is righteous; and his holy love, as the law of righteousness, works in us, setting *us free* from all that is in the flesh. The holiness and righteousness of God must be preserved intact. To sully the former is to destroy it, and to lose the latter. If, then, we sin, we have the Paraclete with the Father—Jesus Christ the righteous, who is our *sin offering and our inheritance*. (Ezek. xliv. 27, 28.) If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. To sin is to be led by the flesh, which, in any degree, is spiritual murder and spiritual adultery. Then must we come again and again, so continually to Christ, for all that is in him—judgment and righteousness—putting away our abominations, and blessing ourselves in the Son of God. We may boldly say, that at any given moment we are in Christ or not. If in him, we are complete in him, and so perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect. If we are not in him, then must we at once seek again the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, whereby we are saved.

There is no such thing as a gradual perfection, as though we possessed a higher perfection to-morrow than that of to-day. This is a human standard. Truly, we may be more vigilant against evil, more prayerful, less frequently overcome, standing stronger in our faith, while our only standard is unchanged and

unimpaired, unmodified and ever perfect—even Christ, the Son of God, in us.

What, indeed, can be compared to the blessed privilege and glorious destiny of man, as involved in the exhortation before us?—called, indeed, to realise God in all his Paternal love, and to do which is, of necessity, to be as he is. For he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. But, alas! what is the fact? The moment a man begins to apprehend something of the meaning of the Lord, he shifts his ground, and begins to *look at himself*, and says, “It is impossible.”

In this age of “enlightened reason,” there are, as there were among the highly intellectual and polished Corinthians, those who divide Christ—who cannot give the cross the prominent position it holds in the teachings of the Lord and his disciples.

If any fail to perceive the eternal verities of the kingdom, is it not because they neglect what the Lord has wrought? The truths of the kingdom are not only different from those which come within the scope of the human understanding, but are spiritually discerned.

The objection that the generality of men do not respond to the exhortation of Christ is of little value, since it is not enforced. If the distinctive truths of the kingdom, and the order in which the Lord has set them forth, were taught, doubtless there would be many witnesses to the faithfulness of God. We see Joseph in the darkest period of his life, under the most trying circumstances, when solicited *by the flesh*, as a perfect man, exclaiming, How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? To prove the negative we leave to others. Elijah ventured upon it, and was told that there were seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Abraham even ventured to look for fifty righteous in filthy Sodom.

Christianity appeals not to the intellect, but to the heart. What ideas, then, of holiness and of love can we form if we do not fully adopt the teaching of the Lord? Some who adopt a traditionary belief rather than that of the Word of God, point with a triumphant air to the words of Paul, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.” They do the Apostle great injustice. They separate these words from their context. He had rebuked those whom he addressed for their

carnal spirit of pre-eminence—a species of vanity they were bringing out of their heathen into their Christian state—fruitful in strife and contention. And the only remedy was the mind which was in Christ Jesus—which was a life and a death the most intensive to the glory of God the Father. This the Apostle claimed for himself. As to the flesh, if any claimed pre-eminence, he had a greater claim than any man. He possessed all the distinguishing privileges of the Jew. He was no proselyte, of princely descent of one who had prevailed with God, with an endless roll of ancestry, of the faithful tribe which followed when the house of David led—even as righteousness follows judgment. He had not unlearned his mother-tongue, but spake the language of the patriarchs and of heaven, and was blameless in life according to the standard of men. All which gave him pre-eminence among men, and especially among his countrymen; so that he would rather have parted with life than have given up any one of these things. Yet he counted them all as loss, all as dung, for Christ. He had so completely cast them off, that his one only desire was to win Christ. He had cast off all in Christ, and he lived to win him, to be found in him, that he might in him possess the righteousness of God. He strove to be made conformable to the death of Christ; at this he aimed, so that, if by any means, he might attain to the power of his resurrection; but he counted himself not to have attained, that *by any means* he might follow on and attain, as if he had not already attained; so making his calling and election sure. *Let us then, as many as are perfect*, be thus minded. In the same Epistle, he says, Brethren be followers of me. Would he dare say this, except for him to live was Christ—Christ all and in all? Let us just review the Lord's teaching of what it is to be perfect. We are in Christ Jesus crucified to the world, and in the Spirit of the Son, cry, Abba, Father! Then are we the salt of the earth, and the light of the world—the law is fulfilled in us, in righteousness and in judgment. If we transgress, we are then spiritual murderers and spiritual adulterers. If we in nowise are to take a lower standard than that of Christ, so are we to be most careful that we do not violate it. Having, then, this righteousness, the law of it works accordingly. Thus are we perfect, though we count ourselves not to have apprehended that for which we are apprehended of in Christ Jesus.

CHAPTER VI.



1 TAKE heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them:
2 otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore
when thou doest *thine* alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the
hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have
3 glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when
4 thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that
thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself
shall reward thee openly.

5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are*: for they
love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets,
that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their
6 reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou
hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father
which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen *do*: for they
8 think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye there-
fore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of,
before ye ask him.

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven,
10 Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth,
11 as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our
12 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but
13 deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the
14 glory, for ever. Amen. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your
15 heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their tres-
passes, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

16 Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance:
for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily
17 I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest,
18 anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast,
but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in
secret, shall reward thee openly.

19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth
20 corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for your-
selves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and
21 where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is,

22 there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore
23 thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye
be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light
24 that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve
two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he
will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and
mammon.

25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall
eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on.
26 Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the
fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into
barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better
27 than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his
28 stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the
29 field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say
unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of
30 these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is,
and to-morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye
31 of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or,
32 What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (for after all
these things do the Gentiles seek :) for your heavenly Father knoweth that
33 ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God,
34 and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take
therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for
the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

THE Lord now sets out with the principle that should direct us in all we do. If we possess the righteousness of God, we are perfect. Then let it act spontaneously, and take care that nothing interferes with its free operation. The Lord having brought us face to face with invisible realities, would have us fully realise the truth in all its simplicity, divested of all that is in man, and unaffected by the judgment of men; but, if expediency be the motive of our actions, let us not be deceived—they are not of God.

Take heed, therefore, that you do not your righteousness before men. If you do, you have no reward with your Father which is in heaven. The Lord speaks according to the very nature of things. If we are agreed, we walk with God, we are righteous, we possess righteousness, and it works; then, how shall we do it, or how shall it work with respect to man? Does the sun with-

hold its light, waiting the pleasure or approbation of man? Does God withhold his love, making it dependent upon man's acknowledgment or acceptance? The substance and the symbol must both come forth; but if anything extraneous be the cause, they would not act according to their own law, and they cease to be. So of righteousness, if it works—what have we to do with the approbation or disapprobation of man, whose breath is in his nostrils?

He that doeth truth cometh to the light, though men love darkness, that he may make manifest that his works are wrought in God. But if expediency, or any other worldly consideration, supersede the law of righteousness, how can we manifest that our works are wrought in God? Let us, then, not leave the high vantage ground on which the truth has placed us. Look not to the world which, in the death of Christ, is already judged.

In religion, ethics, and worldly relationships, whatever is not of righteousness is in no honour, but to the filling up of the flesh.

What, then, is the reward? It is "*with our Father*," to be one with Him. If, then, we have respect unto the reward which is the natural result of obedience to the truth, we cannot regard men.

2. Alms-deeds imply a common brotherhood, attest a common Father, and, as the fruit of righteousness, evidence a true communion, and so are the expression of a principle that knows no party nor sect. But what a miserable abortion is that which dispenses its gifts to those only who are of its own peculiar views! Hypocrites, our Lord called such. We cannot say that they were devoid of benevolence; on the contrary, the term implies that they exercised it most actively, and doubtless allowed none to suffer want. But he saw that the outer act had nothing to do with righteousness. Accidental circumstances have given to many large possessions; and from their abundance they do works, and receive the laudations of men. An excessive deference is now paid to riches, and so to rich men. Can there be a greater witness to the universal prevalence of unrighteousness? The Apostle says, I may give all my goods to feed the poor, and my body to be burned; and yet, not having love—the *αγάπη* of God—I am only sounding brass, a tinkling cymbal. He may have

alluded to the customs of the Jews. Whether or not, he regards such only as sounding brass. It may give a loud or a low note, but men do sound it. They have their reward, and in the nature of things put from them the true. Righteousness has its own reward, and that a present and heavenly one. And what, in comparison with it, shall be worthy of the name?

We would here notice that the Lord refers to alms-deeds with respect to the law of righteousness; then to prayer with respect to righteousness itself; then to fasting with respect to judgment, or the condemnation of sin in the flesh. It is evident, then, that the order *is inverted*. Before, he showed that rejection of redemption was murder; turning from the Spirit of God was adultery; and doing after men was against love—the law of righteousness.

3. Those who struggle with the cares of life, who know some of its stern realities, know how to regard those who sound a trumpet before them. They are ever suspicious, and rightly so, of those who are ever talking of their religion, who adopt religious cant. So far, then, from sounding a trumpet before thee, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth. We can imagine how he, in whom dwelt all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, would, in using a figure of speech, or a popular saying, raise out of an earthly a heavenly and spiritual meaning. The right hand bestows alms; but the right hand is, as we have already remarked, the symbol of power, and that in redemption. So far, then, from letting your work be done before men, do not let your left hand know what your right hand doeth. Since what it doeth evidences that you hath put off the flesh, then consult not the flesh, regard it not.

Paul, when the truth was revealed to him, conferred not with flesh and blood, listened not to the prejudices of his own carnal mind. In respect of alms-deeds, some commend the tenth of their income, and set it apart, doleing it out. Giving a tenth—the sign of totality—should signify that we sit loose *to all*. And it demands a greater effort to recognise the claims of all, and at all times, than by one act to put away a certain sum—a self-delusion, as if love or the law of righteousness consisted in one act. Again, Ananias and Sapphira would give up all, but their left hand is consulted, and so *a divided heart* is revealed, and it is

a lie before God. The carnal mind will supplant the law of righteousness, and perhaps do more than it; or it may so influence the original intention that it may come to nought—be driven back into itself.

4. These antitheses strikingly set forth the truth. The rewarding openly cannot mean prosperity in this world's goods. Whosoever has much of these has much of the curse, for they are cursed for his sake—for his good—hence they are subject to vanity. Thine alms are to be *in secret*—in the hidden man of the heart, in its relation to that which is invisible. It obeys its law of love. All which is opposed to the hypocrite, for what he does is in the outward, and is manifest to men. The secret is all that which is invisible to the world, in respect to which the term is used. Openly, respects God and his kingdom. To him nothing is secret. He seeth in secret, and rewards us openly—in our knowing, revealing, and glorifying him in a foretaste now, and in a glorious consummation hereafter. Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. (1 John iii. 1.)

5. Many beautiful things have been written on prayer, and if we have followed the great Teacher of Israel, we are prepared to say something about the place it holds in the economy of God. Prayer is the earnest desire of a righteous soul for all that concerns the glory of the Father, and the blessedness of adoption. How can men pray according to God, if they be indifferent to the place it holds in the economy of the grace of God? The declaration is, I, Jehovah, the Elohim (the Covenant Ones), which redeemed thee: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it. But *my people* would not hearken to my voice; and Israel *would none of me*. (Ps. lxxxi. 10, 11.) We are to open our mouth wide, for all the blessings of the covenant in their fulness, because the Father has revealed himself in our redemption. (See 1 John v. 13—15.) Let men ignore the fact of their redemption, and they cannot make the true ground of prayer; they ask amiss:—Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. (James iv. 3.) Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? If, then, we take our ground in Christ, the Lord shows us in his own

prayer what is the earnest and continual desire, even that which expresses fellowship and communion with God.

Prayer may be likened to the action of the lungs with respect to the atmosphere—where that action ceases there is no life. A hasty spirit will perhaps reply, Am I, then, to be always on my knees? You may be on your knees and yet not pray. The action of the lungs is involuntary, and so is true prayer. Were overwhelming darkness and the densest cloud of sin to envelop us, it would not cease, but the more earnest would be the cry, My God, why hast thou forsaken me? We are apt to regard prayer as mere audible speech, and that in a certain posture. True prayer is the soul's desire—it longs after God; and to be destitute of this desire is to be, in the emphatic language of James, adulterers and adulteresses. This desire may or may not be expressed by language and posture. The Lord admonishes us against vain mutterings. No teaching or doctrine can supersede the necessity of prayer; no attribute or perfection of God renders it needless. To ask according to the will of God, is to realise what that will is, to realise that which attests the will. If we know that he hears us, *whatsoever we ask*, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. (1 John v. 15.)

When we possess the mind which was in Christ Jesus, God both wills and works in us according to his good pleasure. Prayer, then, *is the expression of the will of him who dwells within us*, and its answer is only in the experience. The Lord has said, *Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name*, that will I do: then we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. On the other hand, it is said, Ye lust, and have not; ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not; ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss.

The Lord deals with men as they are, and thus distinguishes the hypocrite and the heathen: that professes to know, this does not know the Father. Now, all true prayer is the simple realisation of what is. No man can present acceptable prayer but in the name of Christ, not by attaching his name at the end of it, but in him, as we have already said. Man has no idea, out of Christ, of his soul necessities. But his Father knoweth what things he hath need of before he asks him. True prayer will ever be the

realisation of what, in the preventive grace of God, is bestowed upon every man. Vain repetitions are denounced. They must be. What need have we of them? If prayer be the appropriation of what is, then repetition will be the expression of failure, and is vain. Man, blinded by sin, thinks God is moved by much speaking. Our Father knoweth our need. He has provided abundantly for our wants. And it concerns his honour and his glory that we should possess that provision.

When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites: for they love to be seen of men. They may have observed literally what is written. (Ps. cxix. 164.) The Psalmist observed seven stated times for prayer; thereby testifying *to the covenant* blessings, which he possessed in approaching his God. But when thou prayest, enter into thy closet. The idea which the original word furnishes is simply a place cut off, or parted off (*το ταμειον*, from *τεμνω*), as from the busy world, away from the observation of men. This the Lord Jesus was wont to seek, where, in sacred audience, undisturbed, he poured out his soul to him, who is our Father. We are to withdraw ourselves from the outward and visible, to enter *το ταμειον*,* and to pray to the Father, which is *in the secret* . . . as unrevealed to the world. This all men may do, even those in the busy marts of commerce, and the usual haunts of men, in the midst of temptation, and surrounded by cares and anxieties of every kind. All may feel that they are *in the presence chamber of the Lord*. Let a man possess his vessel in sanctification and in honour. Let his body be a holy temple, and he will therein offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable unto God, which is not to be confounded with praying in a consecrated building. This may follow—may be an expression of that. It will be an outward sign in the presence of men, but will never give the reality itself.

7. Hypocrites have regard to the persons of men, but the heathen, who are outside the kingdom, think they shall be heard for their much speaking; but the Christian, having tasted that the Lord is gracious, hungers and thirsts after righteousness.

* We are cautioned by the most distinguished of the Greek and Latin fathers not to take this *το ταμειον* literally.—*Alford, in loco*. Why should we take any part of the Lord's discourse literally? If not, then why should we be cautioned respecting this?

9. Thus, therefore, pray ye. These words, doubtless, are given as intimating what would be the soul's aspirations in oneness with God; for the prayer in this part of the Lord's sermon supposes all that is gone before. In it, we have the life and experience of a man perfect before God, for no petition comes forth from his lips but what is already a reality within. Else it is a *vain* repetition. The Father does not mock any man—before he calls he answers.

Our petition, then, will be, Our Father which art *in the heavens*, Hallowed be thy name. We invoke the Father *in his covenant relation to us*. It is this name "Father" that is hallowed. And it is so by our revealing him. Even as our great Exemplar teaches us in his words, "He that hath seen me hath not seen me, but him that sent me." What a glorious, what a blessed privilege it is to reveal the Father, with a perfect self-negation! The Lord Jesus bears witness, saying, If ye believe not me, believe the works that I do, that ye may believe the Father hath sent me. All his works were in judgment and righteousness. That this is no less the teaching of the Scriptures of his time—of the Old Testament—is clearly seen in some of its most instructive passages. When the children of Israel were in the wilderness—had realised their redemption out of bondage—they cried for water. It was an opportunity for Moses to have hallowed the name of the Father. The redemption and national life of the Jews, with their wilderness and Palestine condition, were an outward representation of the invisible spiritual realities of the kingdom. So when we realise our redemption in Christ, we shall desire it more and more, that that water may be living water, the water of life, the Holy Spirit. But Moses here failed. He did not hallow the Father. He failed in himself. However, the Father vindicates his own honour. The cry of redeemed Israel was that of need. Wherefore, the Father commanded water to flow. It came forth from the smitten rock, not to be smitten by man, but invisibly smitten by God, and that rock was Christ. If, then, we be evil, and come to the cross, we put on Christ; the burden is removed, and we cry for the living water—for the Holy Spirit, who is come in the name of Christ, and who is realised in Christ the Son of God. Let us lay this to heart. It cuts at the root of all our exclusiveness and self-conceits; for the name of

our Father which is in heaven can never be hallowed but in those gifts implied by the *living* water. All are redeemed—the Spirit is poured out upon all flesh. If, then, we be without these gifts, we not only fail to hallow the Father's name, but we dishonour him. "Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." He upbraids no man, however destitute, who, under the sense of need, cries unto him. He loves to magnify his holy name, that all the families of the earth may be blessed in him. Wherefore Jehovah spake unto Moses and Aaron, saying—Because ye believed me not, to *hallow me* before the *sons* of Israel, therefore ye shall not lead this congregation into the land which I have given thee. (Numb. xx. 12.) Any one failing the Spirit of the Father cannot reveal him, therefore cannot lead any into the land of promise.

10. Then, as we hallow the name of the Father through and in Christ, we realise the kingdom in the overthrow of all adverse power. Now is this world judged; now is the prince of this world cast out; for our Melchizedek reigns, and as the Son of the true David, he is putting all enemies under his feet. This is our experience. We know that the strong man is cast out; that the finger of God has been seen; and our soul's desire is that the time may be hastened when every enemy shall be destroyed, and all that scandalizes shall be put out, and the kingdom be given up to the Father, that God may be all and in all. Then, as inseparable from this, the will of the Father will be done on earth as it is in heaven: else how manifest him? Hallow his name. If we do his will, we reveal him who is light. If we are not partakers of Christ our King, our light is under a measure, and is worthless. Angels excel in strength doing his will. Being holy, they do the will of the Father. Holiness is their essential characteristic, and so the will of God is the law of their being. However, man's destiny is higher than theirs: while they represent holiness, man will witness to love, the bond of union, the law of the divine nature, which has fathomed the deepest depths of human degradation and guilt. So the Father's will is done by us when we possess this holy love as the law of our being. Thus, in these first three petitions, we confess the Trinity—in adoption, the Father; in holiness, the Christ; and in love, the Holy Ghost.

11. The fourth petition *is the expression* of an abiding trust in God, where there cannot be a lusting for the things of the world. And although these may come, they are made subservient to the truth, that *when they fail*, the Three Persons of the Trinity may receive us into *everlasting* habitations. (Luke xvi. 9.) When these supplies to our bodies fail, then have we no more a frail tenement, but an everlasting one, dependent on no such supplies. This petition, then, teaches us that, if we possess the three preceding, our one and continual desire will be after righteousness.

It is asked which petitions in the Lord's prayer respect our spiritual, and which our temporal wants.

If God is to be worshipped in Spirit and in truth, man must live in Spirit and in truth. Then, if God has cared for our spiritual necessities, will he forget our temporal? And, in this petition, although according to the letter, there is a limiting of our wants to our temporal necessities, there is, in truth, no reference whatever to them, any more than there is in the fourth beatitude. (See *The Analogy of the Faith*, pp. 39, 108, 188, 263.) If we be careful to possess the former petitions, we have no need to care for temporal things (chap. vi. 33). How can we? If we be Christians, shall we have a true temporal want unmet? We are distinctly told that if we mind earthly things we are enemies to the cross of Christ. The Lord's temptation was for forty days—typical of a life. It witnessed that he walked not in the old Adam nature, as he *manifestly put it off* in his baptism. Does he want bread—his daily bread? then he is solicited to meet his own wants. "Not only make the stones bread, but give a sign to all who see you." The answer is simple, inasmuch as the Lord draws the distinction between the old Adam nature and the last Adam, saying—Man lives not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. He sought and testified to the kingdom of God and his righteousness; *he fulfilled it*; but he did not pray for his daily bread, and therefore does not teach us to do so. (Luke xii. 24.) If we possess the truth, all things relating to our temporal necessities are subject unto us. There is no necessary connexion between righteousness and worldly prosperity. To be rich in visible things is a call to be rich toward God; and if God be not our possession, earthly

riches will condemn us. However, adverse circumstances accord better with our prosperity in heavenlies.

12. A forgiving spirit must be our experience, else how can we manifest the Father? How shall we reveal him if we withhold his mercy—his most gracious attribute? We must not meet wrong-doing with carnal weapons, but manifest the enduring compassionate mercy of our Father.

Therefore, when we pray, Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors, we are forced into the possession of this mercy, and are taught that the way to realise it towards ourselves is by showing it unto others. This petition may be thought to be superfluous, since, in our possessing the forgiving mercy of our Father, we possess him. But we must manifest it. If it be the one desire of the righteous soul to reveal the Father, it will be in exhibiting mercy, despite the wrong-doing of others.

13. If, then, we would hallow the Father's name, and show mercy to others, we shrink from temptation. Does God, then, lead us to be tempted? The Spirit of our Father led him of whom he testified—"Thou art my beloved Son," to be tempted of the devil. It is our portion, so long as we are in the flesh, though we have believed into Christ, and are sealed with the Spirit of promise. We are led to be tempted of the devil. In this temptation all things are proved, that the dross may be purged away, and herein we reveal Christ. In all the temptations of the flesh, the world, and sin, we overcome only through Christ. He strengthens us, and we are more than conquerors through him. If we agonize the good agony of faith, wherein we overcome, we learn truly how that our Father is perfect in all his providential dealings.

The last petition is, Deliver us from evil. Christianity does not indemnify us from the ever-recurring assaults of our great adversary. If it did, we should have but little necessity for this petition. But it, in the place it holds in the prayer, teaches us that no experience, however perfect before God, guarantees the future. How, then, is this petition answered? How are we delivered from evil when we find a law in "our members warring against the law of our minds?" The answer is, "In doing truth." The law of the Spirit of life hath set me free from the law of sin and death. (Rom. viii. 2.) This is true life, and in

the manifestation of it, according to its own law, we are delivered from all evil, and witness to the Holy Spirit of God.—*Analogy of the Faith*, pp. 149—230.

14, 15. The obligation to forgive is repeated. It shows not only the necessity of a forgiving spirit, but that the absence of it closes our hearts against the presence of God, and the influences of his grace, and renders us obnoxious to him. In a world lying in the wicked one—a world of error and wrong-doing—a world of antagonisms, strifes, and contentions, we have more frequently the opportunity in a self-sacrificing, loving Spirit to reveal the Father. Shall we, then, cavil at this clear and unmistakeable teaching of the Lord? Shall we regard it from our own carnal experience? Should we not rather feel that the words of Jesus are powerful realities, and that, resting in God, we perfect holiness in the fear of his name? He who knew what was in man, who could see the working of the soul in its relation to the truth, found it necessary not only to bear with man's dull apprehension of it, but also to repeat again and again, in one and another form, the same truths, in order that his hearers might be built up into godliness. He thus repeatedly witnesses to that condition indispensable to the development of our spiritual life. This distinguishing feature in his teaching stands out in bold relief, in marked contrast with the teaching of the present day; in which, alas! too often pride, and conceit, and love of human applause, render nugatory the holy function ordained of God.

16. We may trace in these exhortations a connexion lying deep in the very foundation and essentials of Christianity. Alms-deeds, prayer, and fasting, in doing righteousness, respect those essential truths, by which we are of the covenant. There is, indeed, much to commend any to his fellow-man in alms-deeds, prayer, and fasting—all which the flesh may possess. Enrobing itself in a sanctimonious garb, it may be an exact counterfeit of the true. A love to our enemies demands a fasting widely different from that of hypocrites. The prayer for forgiveness as we have forgiven, demands a fasting which mercy alone can bestow. Hypocrisy is only the outer mask. But in mercy there is a putting away of, not merely one sinful habit or another, but the flesh altogether—a fast in secret, in the hidden man of the heart, according to Christ.

In the Pentateuch one fast was appointed. It belonged to an outward and visible system of types and shadows, which, as outward, continually testified to the unbelief of the Jews. Is it such a fast, says Jehovah, that I have chosen: for a man to afflict his soul for a day, to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Is not this the fast that I have chosen, to loose the bands of wickedness: to undo the heavy burdens—commandments multiplied, as it were tied together, forming one heavy yoke, and laid upon men's shoulders—to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? The true fast is the putting off of bondage—the flesh in Christ. Rend your heart and not your garments, and turn unto Jehovah, your Elohim. There is no devotional fast for the expiation of offences, and we should entirely miss the simple truth the Lord here distinctly teaches, if we suppose that he speaks of fasting as a duty—an ordinance respecting which he is giving some directions—because he intended his disciples to observe it.

Moses fasted forty days and nights, and thereby was a witness to redemption, and accounted the *affliction* of the children of Israel of more glory than the riches of Egypt. Being crucified to them was of more glory than the possession of them. The King of Nineveh, at the preaching of Jonah, who doubtless witnessed to the truth—of which his being three days and three nights in the whale's belly was a sign—commanded that both men and cattle should fast, witnessing to the truth that the carnal nature is put off, and with it everything that would exalt itself against the knowledge of God.

All reference to fasting in the New Testament teaches the same truth. In the fasting and temptation of the Lord, we learn that the enemy will assail us in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; and he is resisted and overcome only as in the *true* fasting we put off all that savours of man. If we are kept from evil, it will be only by the cross: of this there can be no outward mark, so as to elicit the praise of man. Moreover, against it no creature—no earthly power nor circumstances—can avail. It requires no meretricious aid, as in an outward abstinence. The Lord warns us against all external marks of this inward fasting. Being strong in this we may, like our Master, come under the designation of being gluttonous and wine bibbers.

This fasting *in secret*, then, is in nowise to be identified with a rigid and bigoted asceticism. The axe is laid at the root of the trees, and if we put it away from there, we are only hypocrites. A long and gloomy countenance, as expressive of fasting, is incompatible with true religion. For where the true is *there is the anointing of the head and the washing of the face*. So far, then, from torturing the body, we are to give it its best appearance. But this anointing and washing is symbolical of the Nazarene in a dedication to God, and separation from all that is unclean, as in the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

19. Then where this true fasting is, the trials of life are thus met by taking pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses; because great is thy reward in heaven. And the purpose of our life should be not only to obtain it, but to enlarge it; for this *light* affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at things which are seen, but at things which are not seen.

In the East, a man's wealth generally consisted of changes of raiment, which the moth might consume; of hid treasures, which time would rust; of commercial store, which thieves might steal. But supposing men were to guard against these, and so protect their treasure from the influence of the one and the rapine of the other, there is yet another moth and another thief. They are the enlarged desire and death. With the former, what are present earthly possessions worth?—and who shall stay the other?

The Lord cuts at the root of that false teaching which glosses over the faults of men. We are in Christ, or not. We are seeking our heavenly reward, or not: which is to know the Father in all the fulness of the Paternity—a treasure that time cannot consume, nor thieves break through and steal. Let us, then, covet the best gifts—a holy love working, yielding abundantly the fruits of judgment and righteousness to the glory of God. If, indeed, the possession of God, and the glory which follows, be not the first and all absorbing desire of our life, we have, at the best, but a divided heart. Yet, in truth, this cannot be, from the very nature of things. Our heart is God's, or it is not—a vessel sanctified, and meet for his use, or not. It is easy enough to acquiesce in the teaching of Christ; but to conform to it, and to

be made partakers of the divine nature in him, that his holy love may operate in us, demands an unreserved surrender of ourselves to him who has created us, and redeemed us for his glory. True Christianity is not spasmodic, an occasional impulse, acting by fits and starts, or as circumstances may determine, but that healthy action of love and obedience, of ministering life and serving the whole body, as the unostentatious and impalpable law of the heart in the human economy.

If, then, we know ourselves, if we know the deceitfulness of our depraved nature, and have fathomed the deep depths of indwelling sin, and, then, see the hollowness, the vanity, of all earthly things—honours, position, wealth; and, on the other hand, contemplate the grace of God in the gift of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit witnessing to the paternal love of our heavenly Father, where, indeed, should our treasure be but in him; and there our hearts will be also.

All men desire treasure, and most men endeavour to obtain it. They lay it up either on earth or in heaven. It is not for the poor in the treasures of this world to point at the rich; nor for the rich to disregard the poor. All are here addressed. If anything, the poor have greater advantages, for adversity and poverty afford a better school than prosperity and wealth.

The heavenly treasure that naturally follows the true fasting is according to the prayer of Christ, and as he testified: That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may know—he is the Father of the spirits of all flesh—that thou hast sent me.

22. Every word that proceeded from the lips of the Lord, whether of severe rebuke, tender encouragement, solemn warning, or benign approval, was the expression of true love. His teaching is not a stringing together of fragmentary sayings, but a consecutive whole, standing in closest connexion—each saying being a still more expressive declaration or clearer explication of the truth going before. Thus, the free gift and abundance of the heavenly treasure, the necessity of our having it unsullied and untainted is here enforced. The light of the body is the eye. The eye receives light, and the body is filled with it. The eye and eyelid, in their relation to light, represent the soul and flesh in their relation to the true light. If the eye be single (ἀπλούς)

—that is, the eyelid up—the eye receives the light, and the body is filled with light. So the flesh must be put off, then the soul is single, and it is filled with light, and it gives forth light to all men, having regard to the Church—the body of Christ. Freely ye have received, freely give. So the Apostle regards the symbolic teaching of the eye, saying, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and *Christ shall give you light*.

When we walk in the light of day, we are conscious of our bodies being full of light; but when we close our eyelids, so that our eyes cannot receive light, we are conscious of their being full of darkness. If, then, our eye be single, it must receive. It is the law of nature. It has no power to resist the light. God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. The Son of God is the light of life, and lighteth every man coming into the world. The Spirit is light, who begets us as children of the light. So, then, if we are in Christ, we have put off the flesh; we have the true fasting; our eye is single; it receives the light, and gives light to the whole body.

What imagery could more beautifully express the nearness of our Father in all his covenant blessings? As the eye, in the midst of light, being single, receives it in its immeasurable fulness, so the soul, having crucified the flesh, bathed in the glory of a kingdom whose light cannot be hid, gives it forth, to the glory of the Father, in all its unsullied purity, to the whole body. This is for every man. By grace ye are saved, through faith. God is the Saviour of all men, but especially of them who believe. The condemnation of the world is, it doth not realise what is. It loves darkness because its ways are evil. It is of the devil, being of the flesh. (*Πονηρος* is used: it signifies the Evil One.)

We suffer the god of this world, who is already judged and cast out, to blind us. And when we are awakened to this fact, it will be said to us, as it was of old, "What carefulness it wrought in you: yea, what clearing of yourselves; yea, what indignation." Nature herself gives, in her utmost simplicity, an incontrovertible answer to those who argue that they cannot receive the blessing of God except God first moves. Is there one that would so argue respecting the light of day; for he must receive the light, except he determinately, and contrary to nature, closes his eyes. Every returning day attests the grace of God, that he has, without

respect of persons, freely given to us all, all things. If we ignore his redemption, and our hearts are still in Egypt, we have no part in the heavenly treasure—our God is to us only a pillar of darkness instead of a pillar of light. But if we lift the eyelid, will but put off the flesh through Christ, our souls will receive the light. It is God's order. And as the eye is ever receiving, so the soul, in its unlimited capacity, will be ever receiving, in all its fulness, the divine nature. However, the moment the eye loses its single condition, we are in darkness; and so the soul shuts out heavenly blessings. These things are, in their very simplicity, severe realities. But if thine eye be evil—what an awful contrast is presented in that one word (*πονηρος*) evil—the whole is darkness. Apart from the conventional Christianity of the day, we are taught that the eye is evil because it is not single: *the soul is evil because the flesh is not crucified—wholly put off*. To such, the glory of Christ, who is in the image of God, does not shine. It is, indeed, shining, but they resist it. Whatever may have been the past, as the eye cannot store up light, so we cannot have a stock of faith, and all is darkness. We are full of light, or we are full of darkness. No circumstances can modify this teaching of the Lord. Men do draw distinctions where Christ does not. They would make a difference between the flesh and its corruption, as if it were sufficient to put off this, and not that. If the eye be not single, it is evil, says the Lord. We are either in the flesh or in God. The religious world does not draw the line here. Many would make the old garment better. Of course they would shudder at the idea, but they do do it.

Glorious, indeed, is the work of him who opens the eyes of men, to turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith, which is *into* (*εις*) Christ Jesus.

If, therefore, the light that is within thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! A fearful warning, a sad testimony to the folly of man! Here we are not to draw a distinction between the intention and act. Both are sin. The carnal mind is enmity, and its outcoming is simply the manifestation of the indwelling evil. God gives light, but man makes it darkness. He does so when he turns the grace of God into lasciviousness. What, then,

must be said of those who take another standard of life than that the Word of God sets before us? Advocates for a particular election and indefectibility put it thus: "He who will not bring his reason and conscience to the light of God's truth, or obstinately determines to persist in the pathway of error, is, in effect at least, as much in darkness as if he did not possess any such faculties." However, if we have the single eye, we possess the heavenly treasure, and we retain it only as we keep the eye single, and we lay it up by increasing it—that is, by giving it forth to others.

It is possible to be enlightened, to taste of the heavenly gift, to be made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and to fall away, by rejecting Christ; or, as here, cleaving to the flesh, at the same time professing to cleave to the Spirit, and so be in darkness—which, alas! too often takes the form of spiritual pride, the most deceptive of all delusions. And are we not in danger of this when we lack that watchfulness which is identical with the single eye? Do men, indeed, watch against the incoming of carnal desire in order to keep the heavenly treasure intact? And for what trifling things do not men barter away their birthright of heavenly blessings?

24. Foreseeing the half-hearted Christianity that would wrest his words from their true meaning, the Lord continues: No man can serve two masters—Christ and Satan. We serve Christ when we are, with him, crucified to the world, and the world to us, glorifying in his cross. So that instead of obeying the desires of the flesh, we, in him, agonize the good agony of faith; otherwise we are against him, we mind earthly things, and *are enemies* to the cross of Christ. The Lord claims for himself the appellation of Master. He said to his disciples, One is your Master, even Christ; and then, One is your Father, which is in heaven. Thus the Apostle speaks, Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves slaves to obey, *his* slaves ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or obedience unto righteousness. The former phrase is clear enough; but what is to be the slave unto righteousness? Obedience is simply obeying the truth. Christ has died, and we are dead with Christ. Baptism attests it, for we are baptized into death, even the death and burial of Christ, that we should no longer serve sin. If we are slaves of obedience, we have obeyed this truth. And we serve it, striving continually

against all adverse power, so that the death of Christ should be continually a reality in us—then possess we the righteousness of God, and we cry, Abba, Father. Being thus made free from sin, we become slaves of righteousness.

If we know sin—its dominion, power, tyranny—we hate it, and love Christ, who has delivered us from it; for if Christ be in us, the body is dead, because of sin. But if we know not sin, we hate Christ, and love darkness. The last thing that men, and even dying men, will do, is to crucify nature's feelings and affections—to put off the world *in Christ*. Here Satan deceives them. If they have not already put off the world in Christ, they will confound this with a readiness to die. If, then, we love Christ, we hold to God; if not, we hold to mammon, which is the earthly treasure. But in God we have the heavenly treasure, and put under our feet the world, and all that is in it.

How, then, can any one, from the nature of things, serve both masters? It is impossible. Then to suppose for one moment that the Lord taught an impossibility when he required us to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect, is indeed to try to serve two masters. The king that was after God's own heart destroyed every enemy, and could then exclaim, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and whom on earth can I desire beside thee?" Shall we, then, be deceived by our inconsistencies? or shall we have a clear apprehension of the truths of the covenant, and, in the strength and name of the Most High, and for his honour and glory, possess them?

At any given moment we are serving one master or the other. We belong to one or the other. Then let us not deceive ourselves by any fancied security. To possess a security which no contingency can shake, can be ours only so long as the eye is single, and we, possessing righteousness, lay up treasure in heaven—making all earthly things subserve this fixed purpose, this one object of our life. Then shall we have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. All things that are reproved are made manifest by the light. If, then, we be decided, following Christ, we shall indeed hate what we find in ourselves, for we shall always find a law in our members, the law of sin and death, warring against the law of our minds. Therefore, we cannot serve God and mammon.

25. The Lord—by alms-deeds, prayer, and fasting—had respect to love, righteousness, and judgment. He now shows how, in these principles working, treasure is laid up in heaven, and that our hearts being wholly given to it, belong to it; and how, by the imagery of the eye, we were passive recipients of it in all its purity, and so gave it forth to others; that we are not our own, but belong to a Master, whom we love, and whom we serve in that law of righteousness, at the same time hating our enemy—the devil. But as the verb to love is applied indifferently to both masters, because regard is had to the light within becoming darkness, he would thereby signify the awful perverseness, deceitfulness, and desperate wickedness of the human heart in taking *the law* of the Spirit of life, and with it loving sin.

Having, then, set before us the eye, as representing the soul receiving the heavenly treasure, and giving it forth to the whole body, so increasing it that the body is filled with light, thereby laying up treasure in heaven; he cautions us against a common, yet most subtle error, which deprives us of our heavenly treasure—that is, against the cares of this life. Without, then, regarding the claims of the animal nature, *what should be the one object and desire of man?* Should it not be the laying up of this heavenly treasure? The Lord well knew the subtle and specious form the question assumes when put by one with a divided heart—by one who fails to take the ground he has inculcated. “If we are not to heap up treasure upon earth, are we not to care for our lives and for our bodies?” He answers, “Ye are not to have a divided care.” To care for earthly things must beget a desire for an earthly treasure. And where this exists nothing will satisfy it. It grows upon what it feeds. If we understand how superior the heavenly treasure is to all earthly things, we shall give our hearts and our care undivided to it. If we hate not this life, we shall lose eternal life. The enemies to the cross of Christ are they who mind earthly things. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.

We must never forget that the Lord is ever setting forth spiritual truth. God has given to us life. Christ died for all men, and he was the resurrection of all, that all might have life and that more abundantly. All nature teeming with life is a witness to the everlasting Father. Our bodies, then, containing physical

life, would be *outwardly* typical of their being temples of the Holy Ghost. If, then, we be unfaithful in that which is least, we shall be unfaithful in that which is much. We must put things in their right places. We live not for the things of this life, but make them means to an end: if not, they fail in their typical meaning—they fail as a witness for God. All here is another man's. It either perishes with the using, or we surrender it at death. And it is well for us, if, in the exercise of the two principles of the covenant—serving Christ and holding to God—we, by the right use of the mammon of unrighteousness, make to ourselves friends of a Triune God.

We are to have no distracted care for anything of this life—even for necessary things. A man may sow and gather into barns. This is not taking care or thought what he should eat. He labours for others. He has, himself, entered into the labours of others. Now he labours for others. He brings the earth into subjection, and it gives forth life. Thus is he taught by Nature the principles of the covenant—how that, bringing the flesh under subjection, the life of God is then manifested. This is the great end of life. Not, indeed, what we shall eat; or, what we shall put on.

It is only, then, in the possession of these spiritual truths—doing what it is our bounden duty to do—exhibiting the holiness and love of God, that we cannot make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. Here we take the Lord's ground. Our wealth may increase, and with it increased responsibility; or, it may suffer diminution; yet, our experience will be that of righteous Job: "The Lord gave; the Lord hath taken away: Blessed be the name of the Lord." He had prosperity, and he had adversity; but in the name of the Lord, which was his glory and delight, he rose above all earthly things, even the most precious—wife and children.

26. The evil heart of unbelief naturally asks, While we are here, must we not think about what we shall eat, and what we shall drink, and what we shall put on? Many wants are artificial, according to the habits of men.

Let men place before them a given object in the world's ambition, to find how, in pursuing it, they are blinded to the truth that they have already more than enough.

The Lord bids us to contemplate and consider the birds of the air, in order that we may know our heavenly Father. It is a humiliating fact that the Redeemer rebukes our ignorance by examples from nature. He points us to the fowls of the air, and tells us, They neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns. Yet man will not learn that he cannot add to his stature—rather to his course—one cubit. Life is a course, and if he cannot add one cubit—that is one step, identical with a moment of time, for we are all in the wilderness, journeying to the land of promise—if, then, we cannot add one step, or one moment of time, why take thought of that which at the best can be but of uncertain tenure, and not rather hunger and thirst after that which is heavenly.

In the gift of spiritual life, and the supporting of it, we have the pledge of a never-failing blessing. The name of Father pledges him to the fulfilment of all the promises for which he has destined us. He is our heavenly Father, and it is he who feeds the birds of the air. If he, then, feeds these will any make his Paternity *exclusive*?

The promises are fulfilled in the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit. All nations are blessed. All, therefore, are fellow heirs of the glory of the Father, of the same body, even of him who died for all; and partakers of the same promise, even of the Spirit in Christ. Man is an immortal being, created for a glorious destiny. The Father in the revelation of himself, according to his eternal purpose, despite the malignity of evil, attests it. Are we not, then, better than fowls? No man is left to serve sin. It is a libel upon the teaching of Christ to say that it is not within the power of every man to choose whom he will serve—God or mammon.

Thus, then, the Father has revealed himself, and is continually doing so; and has met man's necessities, physical and spiritual, attested by nature: and, in the selection of the example—birds of the air—is reminding us that we should not be worms of the earth, feeding on its fatness; but that, emancipated from all earthly things, should lay up treasure in heaven, possessing the fulness of God, and rendering to him holy, reverential, filial fear.

28. Then, what should be the clothing of those who obey the law of Christian life? What should be the life of men attesting the love of the everlasting Father? Why take thought for

raiment? Why be distracted about such things? Consider the lilies, how they increase. God's great controversy with a redeemed people, typical of a redeemed world, was, as now, my people will not consider.

The language of slighted paternal love is, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. When our heavenly Father, with a nurse's care, feedeth fowls, how much more, then, does he man—created in the image of God, redeemed, and blessed! But, if the cares of this life supplant that filial fear and holy love, which go forth without effort, then the Father is denied, and his love despised.

Consider the lilies, how they increase—how they receive life. They receive it, and so increase in the fulness of it. They receive light, the emblem of life, and give forth its glory. "I say unto you, That Solomon *in all* his glory was not arrayed like one of these." He had a vast treasure on earth—in all the indulgence of the flesh, in all the pomp and circumstance of royalty, in all the mighty power of matchless wisdom. More, he was a great type of the Son of the true David, our Melchizedek: yet in all his glory, he was not arrayed like one of these.

Solomon's glory, the most distinguished of its kind, was only an extrinsic, adventitious glory. But the lilies receive life, and manifest it in its glory—they receive the light, decompose and reflect it in all its beauteous lovely hues, in the very texture of their being. Yet, Solomon was not arrayed like one of these lilies, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven. Then, if we be better than the lilies, the grass of the field; if we be destined to be heirs of the glory of God, should we take thought for the perishing garment? Nay, should we take thought of the perishing garment, even our bodies? Should we not rather be dead and crucified, that we may have the true garment, in the outcoming of the hidden man of the heart, and manifest a glory above all nature, and above all that is external and outward in social life?

Whatever we need for this life, which is subservient to all that is holy and good, will be supplied; for our heavenly Father knoweth that we have need of these things. If, then, he has been pleased to give us true life, he will support it, that we may manifest it. If he has, then, given us this, attesting his great

name, how can he withhold what is meet—spiritual and physical—so long as that name endures? Yet, alas! men take *thought* what they shall eat, and what they shall put on.

32. Well might the Lord rebuke his hearers, and through them men in all time, as of little faith—as having none. They, though Jews, were no better than Gentiles—strangers to the kingdom. Yet, what words can be more persuasive and encouraging when, in true love, he said, “Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.”

33. Whatever, then, be the theories concerning free will, the obligation lies upon every man to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

The kingdom and righteousness are the great matter of the Lord’s discourse. All his teaching in this sermon shows how to seek and possess what is. The grace of God has prevented all men. *The kingdom is established in Christ, and righteousness is poured out in the gift of the Holy Ghost.* Man, being redeemed and blessed, his will is free, and fearful, then, must be his condemnation in disregarding, yea, in despising, the obligation to seek.

We hear of a forensic righteousness; but since righteousness has but one meaning, the partaking of the Spirit of Christ—for Jehovah is our righteousness—a forensic righteousness, expressed or implied, is not in the Bible. If we possess Christ, we are not of this world, we are born of water; then shall we possess his Spirit. So we enter the kingdom of light, and possess the righteousness of God. The Lord, in this sermon, exhorts and encourages, by all means, the multitude to seek the kingdom and righteousness. His teaching, unalloyed by our earthly mindedness, purified from all that is of man, will, in those who receive it, reflect, as in pure metal, the perfect and acceptable will of God.

All these things, says the Lord, shall be added. These words are not restricted to meat and drink. They include all things necessary for the purpose of God and the glory of his kingdom. To say that we shall have all those things for which our hearts uncrucified would lust after, would be to render his whole work abortive.

The command to seek is universal. It is addressed to all. It presents a common ground on which all, ignorant and learned, can

stand. If anything, the wisdom of this world, so highly esteemed among men, is obstructive. But since God is the Father of the spirits of all flesh, and is no respecter of persons, and since the way of holiness is so simple that a wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein, men, taking an exclusive ground, do, by their own act, what God is said to do—make the wisdom of the wise, even their own, to perish; and the understanding of the prudent, even their own, to be hid. A prelate thus writes, “Let the thoughtful reader pause only for a moment to muse upon some of the present aspects of modern society as revealed, as commented on, and sometimes even defended by our public papers, and then answer, to his own heart, what he thinks must be the issue, if the laxity of religious thought seriously increase among us.”—Bishop Ellicott’s *Aids to Faith*. Increase it will. How shall it be otherwise? when many who profess to be teachers of the Word, ambassadors for God in Christ’s stead, have not learned Christ, and whose only qualification is an academical degree and a bishop’s ordination, yet are entrusted with the *cure of souls*. The kingdom, as the way of righteousness, is the mighty power of God cleansing the vessel for the fulness of the eternal One.

Prejudice is the mould of Scripture exegesis, and thoughtful men perceive that the meanings assigned to the words of Scripture are as various as the shades of prejudice—an incontrovertible testimony to the absence of all sound principles of interpreting the Word of life. However, the teaching of Christ is clear and simple, and diametrically opposed to that which predominates at the present time—which seeks, first, a forensic righteousness, with a confused idea of the work of the Holy Ghost. Whatever be this forensic righteousness, scheme of religion, system of Christianity, it is nothing; for it is only when we are in Christ Jesus that we escape darkness, and here is no condemnation. This is God’s order throughout the Word. We must first know the Son of David before we know the Son of Abraham, by whom we cry, Abba, Father. We “first trust in Christ, then are we sealed by the Holy Spirit.” (Eph. i. 12, 13.) To this truth the Jews, in their national existence, witnessed. They were the descendants of Jacob, who represented the spiritual nature, while Esau the carnal. The former loves the birthright—the Father’s gift to all men; the latter hates it, for he will sell it

for his own morsel of meat. Nevertheless, he desires the blessing. But how? It must not be first. So Isaac expressed it when, in his *blindness*, he blessed his sons: to Jacob, he said, "God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fulness of the earth;" to Esau he said, "Thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven." Esau rested in earthly things. He does not reject religion. The blessing, the dew of heaven, comes, but the earthly and sensual is first. The holy is defiled, and in this nature there is "no ground for repentance." Isaac trembled. Would that men trembled as they saw how they were ignoring Christ and blessing the Esau nature. In this nature, and the holy defiled, *there is no place* for repentance. Esau could not find it. But if he seek the kingdom, he finds it, *being in Christ* crucified, putting off all that defileth and maketh a lie, so the enmity is slain; he realises all that God has already done, and then possesses the blessing. But so long as man ignores or puts from him what is, he is his own condemnation.

To recapitulate: In obeying the healing power of God, we realise the beatitudes—present blessings; we are then the salt of the earth, the light of the world; the teaching of the law and the prophets, fulfilled in Christ, the Son of God, our great Exemplar—who in us makes us what he is; and so, in a righteousness which exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees, we break not a tittle of the law. We put off the flesh, we agree with our adversary, we commit not spiritual adultery, and, possessing the divine nature, we reveal it in love, even to our enemies. In doing righteousness, instead of being angry with our brother, we meet his necessities; instead of spiritual adultery, our desire is after God, of which prayer is the expression; and we attest the indwelling presence of God, having the true fasting. So we lay up treasure in heaven. We have it now in all its fulness, having the single eye; therefore, we cannot serve two masters. All nature attests these truths, witnessing what our heavenly Father has done, and is doing. And so we are reminded of our obligation. Herein we perceive the manifold wisdom of God, as made known by the Church to heavenlies. There is one Body and one Spirit. The body is Christ, by whom, or by which body, we all are dead—dead to sin; and thus it is written, one Lord, one faith, one baptism: the truth, it realised, and expressed. And there is one Spirit; so there is

one God and Father of all. And what, then, is the one hope of our calling, but the adoption? We are, indeed, members of the mystical body of Christ; and we manifest the righteousness of God in love, which makes increase, not only in the individual presenting a larger receptivity of soul, but in the mystical compactness of all the members, as the fulness of him who is the head; so that all become as one man perfected, that glory may be rendered to the Father by the Church in Christ Jesus throughout all ages.

34. What is to-morrow? If the desire of the heart be glory unto the Father, in the Church in Christ Jesus, for ever and ever, then to-morrow will be as to-day, and to-day as to-morrow. What, then, have we to do with to-morrow? If we take not the high ground, we cannot add one moment to our life—the present only is ours. Let the morrow take care of itself. You are in the kingdom—you seek it—you have therefore nothing to do with to-morrow. Sufficient for the day is the *evil* thereof. We shall ever find that, while striving for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, the things of this life will force themselves upon us for consideration. All things are subject to vanity—not excepting time. Let us but realise the kingdom of God and his righteousness—an everlasting kingdom and an everlasting righteousness, for this is the Lord's ground—then, what have we to do with vain thoughts or things, all subject to vanity? This is John's idea. He possesses the truth. It goes forth in love to the elect lady. It is the divine love to one who realises it. He cannot help loving, "because of the truth which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us *for ever*." To have, then, a divided care for to-morrow is to serve two masters. Yet how many do so, while they point to others in ignorance, who say, Let me provide for to-morrow, and I will give myself wholly unto God. On the one hand, one, professing to possess the truth, defiles it; on the other hand, the other raises an insuperable barrier to the possessing of it.

No necessary things can imply to-morrow's wants. For, in the truth, we already possess the kingdom and the righteousness of God; our loins are girded, our staves are in our hands, and we are ready for our journey. To die is gain; but if we live it is Christ. What, then, have we to do with to-morrow? If we

possess Christ, we die daily. To take thought of to-morrow, and to possess in Christ an everlasting kingdom and an everlasting righteousness is not only a spiritual incongruity, but to deny that kingdom and that righteousness.

Objectors will cavil. Worldly self-seeking will object. An Esau nature, which tries to serve both masters, which puts the world and all that is in it first, and the kingdom and righteousness second, will object. But, if we realise the truth, to which the Lord witnessed, we shall find in the injunction, to take no thought for to-morrow, an unspeakable consolation, for it implies that we already possess a more enduring possession—an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, and so are delivered from all anxious care and mistrustful fear.

Further, we have here a clear intimation that all that savours of man, the world, and time, is only evil. The creature is made subject to vanity, that he should not put his trust in anything that is not of the Father. Happy, then, is that one who takes his stand in the kingdom, and possesses its righteousness—even God, his only good; for then he has under his feet time, and all things belonging to it, which otherwise only distract and defile.

CHAPTER VII.

1 JUDGE not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye
2 shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to
3 you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye,
4 but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say
to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a
5 beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of
thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of
thy brother's eye.

6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls
before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and
rend you.

7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it
8 shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that
9 seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what
man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?
10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know
11 how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your
Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him!

12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do
ye even so to them: for this is the Law and the Prophets.

13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way,
14 that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because
strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few
there be that find it.

15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but
16 inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits.
17 Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good
tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.
18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring
19 forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn
20 down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know
them.

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the king-
dom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.
22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy

name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many
23 wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you:
depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I
25 will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the
rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon
26 that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one
that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened
27 unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain
descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that
house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people
29 were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as *one* having authority,
and not as the scribes.

THE Lord has intimated in the last verse that every man will be continually assaulted by the great adversary of God and man. Therefore, let no man judge as if he were free, or as if he were always safe, and without sin, but rather retain his high vantage ground, and judge righteous judgment.

The Lord is not here requiring of us to be charitable in our interpretation of doubtful acts; for righteous judgment is righteousness judging, which will ever act according to its own law, true charity—love.

There is, indeed, a readiness to judge against which we must watch. It is the tendency of our corrupt nature to exalt itself, even at the sacrifice of what is right and good. And so, while we are not adopting an outward hypocritical demeanour, we must nevertheless guard against that evil habit of a spurious Christianity, which seeks to degrade others to its own level, then pushes them a little lower, in order to exalt itself.

Judge not. The term implies condemnation, which belongs to no man. Though one becomes to us as a heathen man and a publican, we must not judge. The incestuous person mentioned in the Epistles was excommunicated, and, upon the destruction of the flesh, was restored. The spirit of the kingdom is not to condemn, but to save. The Father sent the Son not to judge the world, but that the world, through him, might be saved. If, then, we have the love of Christ, we cannot judge; else our life would be in antagonism to, instead of holy conformity with, the Lord.

We are to judge righteous judgment—that is, a judgment from righteousness within us. Then the question is, not whether a man is to abdicate the right to judge; but whether it is righteousness or unrighteousness that judges. The former condemns evil, and delivers the oppressed; the latter metes destruction to the oppressed, and exalts self.

Paul says, Be ye angry, and sin not. There is, then, righteous anger, as there is righteous judgment. Being the truth in love (Eph. iv. 15): for we are not perfected till the truth itself is perfected in love; whereby we grow up into Christ Jesus, we have put off the old man—we have put off the lie, *το ψευδος*; and we are then in the truth, and we communicate with our fellow-man, for we are members one of another, because of the body of Christ; by which body we all are dead, and so are members of that body. Then may we be angry, and it will be in respect of sin, but herein we are not to sin: we are not to let the sun go down upon our wrath, for we are light in the Lord, we are children of light, we walk in the light. To let the sun go down upon our wrath is indeed to come out of righteousness, to put off the new man, to sin.

With what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged. If, then, ye judge with the law of righteousness, it will be true judgment—a judgment for the rescue of a brother, in the condemnation not of him, but of sin. Thus, with that same law of righteousness, will ye be judged. But if ye judge without this, then without love will ye be judged. And thus our hereafter will be determined. Not only the nature, but the quantity of judgment is referred to: With what measure ye mete, shall it be meted to you. We all sin, and oftentimes do so. And in judging we shall always rejoice to condemn sin and deliver the sinner. And however a brother may offend, all our efforts, even to the end, will be to set him free in the condemnation of evil. And if, at the very last, when all hope is fled—if he turns, we gain our brother. But failing here, we are strangers to the mercy of God. So, with like measure, will it be meted to us again.

3. The Lord illustrates his teaching by the following parable:—Man, beholding the mote in another, but not seriously considering the beam in himself, is a hypocrite. He has not sought the kingdom, much less the righteousness of God. Whom does the

Lord now address ? Those whom he called the salt of the earth, the light of the world ? Are they hypocrites ? Or, are not his words consistent with all that goes before, that they who realise what is, seek the kingdom and righteousness, attest the one Father by whom all are brethren ; and that they who do not exhibit evil in antagonism to it, that such are hypocrites, dogs, swine—terms having respect to the truth of God. Who, then, is a brother ? He is opposed to hypocrites, as he serves God in Spirit and in truth ; to dogs, in that he truly hates the flesh ; to swine, in that being delivered from the flesh, he does not return to it. He earnestly seeks the righteousness of God in the Holy Ghost. (Rom. xiv. 17.) More, since the truth, despite the malignity of evil, and the perversity of human nature, exists, and the purpose of God has been carried out though evil would stay his hand, all men are brethren, members of one body ; therefore is it the desire of every child of God that his brother should seek the kingdom and the righteousness of God.

The great error is to regard all men as lost, and then compelling them, *as lost*, to do something in order that they may be saved. Consequently they have only to think themselves different from other men, or to what they themselves were in former years. Whereas all are saved, for God is the Saviour of all men. He has cleansed the world, therefore it is the bounden duty of every one to realise what is, and to bring himself to the holy standard of God. For when we possess the holiness and love of God—the two essential elements of a true faith—we have nothing more than we ought to have ; while he who ignores the common brotherhood is a hypocrite, a dog, or a swine.

It is objected that this knowledge and experience of the truth cannot be attained to, and that earnest men have departed this life with that conviction. This would be no argument against the truth any more than the existence of stout-hearted infidels. How, then, are we to demean ourselves towards such earnest and anxious minds, who may not have built upon the one foundation—who have not honoured their God in Christ—are we to condemn them ? We must not judge, but we are to pull the mote out of their eye, and this we cannot do until we have first removed the beam in our own eye. If men would but begin here, they would

bury all the strifes, contentions, jealousies, heartburnings, and petty antagonisms of the Christian world.

Paul speaks plainly, and says, "No whoremonger, or unclean person, or covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God," which are identical with the kingdom of God and his righteousness. In these descriptions of men he describes those who live in the flesh, who do not crucify it, or who lust for any earthly thing, however trifling. If it were possible for such to have the kingdom of God, he shows their covetousness—grasping at shadows and neglecting the substance. This outspoken way, though distasteful to those who have not yet valued the heavenly treasure, or counted the cost of possessing it, is no judging in the sense here forbidden, but a warning. If we discover one who is thus dishonouring our heavenly Father, it is for us to remove the mote, for if there be a spirit or tendency to prejudice, it is hypocrisy. Before we attempt to remove the mote in a brother's eye, there must be the deep searching of heart that the beam is removed from our own. If we have done this there will be no form of error that we shall not be able to meet—that whatever be the mote, *we shall see clearly* how to pull it out.

4. What, then, is the mote? and what the beam? In this most simple and instructive parable, the contrast is not between something small and something large, as if the one was a splint and the other a large piece of timber. The Lord uses no such hyperbole. But it is between the flickering mote in the sunbeam, and the sunbeam itself, which contains, and, as it were, *gives existence* to the mote. It is between the outward single act, *which alone we can see*, and the fruitful and inexhaustible source of all evil. The one is sins, the other sin.

Some may object to the use of *δοκος* as a sunbeam. However, if we can find but one ancient writer so using it, it will be sufficient, though this would not be necessary in order to justify the Lord so using it.—Appendix (B).

He has frequently referred to light: "Ye are the light of the world:" "The sun shining upon the evil and upon the good:" "The single eye receiving light." Thus, light is present to the mind of the Lord. Again, he speaks of the light in us becoming darkness. What is this but like Satan, once the brightest angel

of light, becoming darkness itself. The Lord, as a true master, can use his imagery to suit his subject, and in its application is not confined to one meaning. Such is not stereotyped on the language of Scripture—there is the leaven of the Holy Ghost and of the Pharisees; the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and the roaring lion seeking whom he may devour; the sunbeam, emblem of the love of the Father going forth to all alike, and of the source of all evil. The soul, as the eye, has the gift of God—the sunbeam; but the light is darkness, and it gives forth its motes. We may see this beam in our own hearts, full of flickering motes. But all that we can see in a brother is the mote, *yet it will attest the presence of the beam*. If, then, we have first taken the beam out of our own eye—sought truly the kingdom and righteousness—we shall *see clearly how* to take the mote out of a brother's eye; and this we can never do without leading him first to remove the beam—so, turning him from darkness to light, in the clear apprehension of the realities of the kingdom. We may, indeed, preach a very taking Gospel, and yet not *see clearly* how to do that which it is our bounden duty to do. The mote is *in* the beam, and he who would remove the mote from a brother's eye, must know how to remove the beam, and this he cannot do who has not yet removed it from himself. A terrible responsibility rests with those who, from worldly considerations, put men in charge of souls.

The Jews would judge the woman taken in adultery. All the abominations that outrage society are only motes. The worst only gives evidence of the beam. Therefore, the great Teacher says, "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone." They had not, as yet, taken the beam out of their own eye; therefore, they could not see how to deliver this erring sister from the terrible thralldom—the beam—which gave such unmistakable evidence of its presence by the mote, which they were so clever to discover. The Jews, as a nation, specially called out to witness to what is, played false. They were guilty of spiritual adultery, because they knew not Christ, had not learned him. So is every man who does not, before all things, first seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Having not the mind that was in Christ Jesus, they knew not how to remove the mote as he did:—"Go, and sin no more." Let no longer sin work in you to do

its bidding. However gross her conduct, and unendurable, by the strict moralist, it is not so heinous as that shameless spiritual pride which plays false with God, either in patching the old garment of the flesh, or taking an imperfect standard of life.—Appendix (C).

David would have judged another to death, because he had discovered in him a mote—the criminal had basely stolen a lamb, and in his ingratitude had outraged the kindest hospitality. But, when the seer, Nathan, led him to see the beam in his own eye, he thought not of the outward act, but of the evil which was against his God, as he confessed, “Against Thee only have I done this evil.”

We may refer to another case to see that we grasp the truth without respect of persons. Peter, in his conduct with respect to Cornelius, shows what a remarkable application the parable has to himself. In his narrow prejudices, he was only carnal. However, he was reminded by the vision that God had cleansed the world—all men as well as himself—so that there was nothing common or unclean; and although first of the Apostles, and the honoured instrument for the conversion of thousands, he had a fearful tendency to return to the flesh, against which his Lord was ever warning him, and, indeed, for which Paul reprov'd him. And when by the vision he saw and contemplated, and was instructed into the covenant made with all flesh, we see, by his sermon, how he took the beam out of his own eye, and helped Cornelius to remove it from his also.

6. Thus should we act towards a brother ignorant of the truth, or overtaken with a fault. If we seek not to restore such an one, we are only hypocrites. Now, we have to deal with, not hypocrites, but dogs and swine. Both of these were an abomination, and were despised by the Jews. Dogs and swine, as two of the most unclean of animals, represent those who reject the counsel of God, and prefer the world and unrighteousness to the kingdom of God and his righteousness. They deny the law of their being; for God has in Christ cleansed all mankind. Thus Peter writes, For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is

turned to his own *vomit again*, and the sow that *was washed*, to her wallowing in the mire. To a thoughtful mind this is no overwrought picture. Dogs represent those who reject Christ, and go their own way in the filth of the flesh. They turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. Whereas, the swine are they, who, after partaking of the washing, return to their own filth, and thus sin against the Spirit—the Holy Spirit of God. Give not, then, *το ἅγιον*—the holy thing—to dogs, nor cast your pearls before swine. If we turn to Lev. xxii., we find this enforced. Neither Aaron, nor any of the children of Israel was to partake of the holy thing with any uncleanness upon him. To partake of anything signified one with it. How, then, could they ceremonially partake of the holy thing, being in uncleanness?

It must be borne in mind that they had been redeemed and baptized. They were baptized in the Red Sea, signifying, thereby, how that redemption was *to be effective* in them; and so, had put off the bond of iniquity and all uncleanness. It would then be their duty to partake of the holy thing as a sign or expression of what spiritually should have taken place. Outward and visible things fail to express the truth in its simplicity and perfectness. In spiritual realities, all uncleanness is purged away only by partaking of the holy thing. In the work of Christ, God has put away sin, and cleansed all men from all iniquity. Hence, it is our duty to be one with him, to partake of him; else, great will be our condemnation, neglecting so great salvation. Who, then, is holy? Even he who has put away sin in Christ, who realises his redemption in truth. However, in the outward representative act, a man may partake of the appointed holy thing, and his uncleanness remain. Wherefore, the command is that he shall not partake of the holy thing in his uncleanness. Thus he is taught what the spiritual inward condition should be, that a man cannot partake of the holy thing and be in uncleanness.

To be, then, in uncleanness, is to despise that which necessarily makes us clean. Dogs, being unclean animals, represent those who despise the mercy of God, who obstinately and obdurately remain dogs: they prefer the *filth of the flesh*—their own vomit—to the holy things. They trample under foot the blood of the everlasting covenant, and count it an unholy thing: they reject the kingdom of God, as the Lord says: Without are dogs. There-

fore to such who thus despise the Paternity of God, the brotherhood in Christ, and determinately pursue their own way despite all brotherly solicitation, the holy thing is not to be given.

What an awful mockery is that of partaking of the sacrament, of the supper of the Lord—an eating to themselves condemnation not considering *the Lord's body, whereby they are dead to sin!* for, so long as they fail here they are an unclean thing. It does not make them clean, but should be the expression of what was within. However, unclean, they eat the holy thing.

Who, then, are the swine? They represent those who had knowledge of the way of righteousness, who thus tasted of the heavenly gift, who, having been washed, turn again to the mire. What, then, are the pearls, which these, in the sad words of Jesus, trample under foot? What are these pearls which stand in such close connexion with the holy thing? Pearls are valued according to their purity. They are translucent, and of silvery whiteness, and are brought up from the deep—a striking and appropriate representation, or emblem, of the resurrection life—the righteousness, the divine life through Christ: a life which is realised only after a baptism into death—a true baptism of Christ, and which is bestowed by the Spirit of life. Thus, the holy thing is Christ in his death and burial—the kingdom of God triumphing over every enemy. The pearls are the life of God in the soul, imparted by the Holy Ghost, and love, its operating law, shed abroad in the heart. The dogs, in antagonism to Christ, turn upon those who would lead them to him and rend them. The swine, having known Christ, falling away, trample the pearls under foot.

It is, then, unanswerably true, that they who have the kingdom and the righteousness of God, who can take the mote out of a brother's eye—that they have the power to give that which is holy to, and to cast pearls before men, for freely they have received, and, so, freely are they to give. The words of the Lord are exemplified by Stephen, before the Sanhedrim. Having testified to the death of Christ from the Old Testament, he sought to give them the holy thing, that they might also possess the pearls; but they turned and rended him. Uncircumcised in heart and ears, they resisted the Holy Ghost, and turned and stoned him. The same spirit pervades Christendom—high or low, broad or narrow—the cross

is an offence, the holy thing is despised, pearls are trampled under foot, and the brother is persecuted. -

God is not a God of confusion, but of order. After Stephen had borne testimony that the Law, Psalms, and Prophets attested Christ Jesus, we read that Philip preached Christ, the way of righteousness: the Gentile obeyed and confirmed it by his baptism; then the Apostles bestowed, by the laying on of hands, the Holy Ghost. Baptism and confirmation are ordinances—the former of a death to sin, the latter of life to God. And since one performed that, and others this, it was to mark distinctly the order in which the truths, the essential principles of the kingdom, must be received.

7. The Lord graciously considers every possible objection, whether it respects the lofty and unbending principles of Christianity, or the grovelling depravity of the human heart. There is a naturalness in all his sayings which is in perfect accord with the experience of him who strives to carry out the principles he everywhere inculcates. He warns us against hypocrisy, for nothing is more odious than religious peculiarities—they belong to the man, and not to Christ. But if we possess Christ and the Spirit, we, in the language of the Lord, give the one, and cast forth the other; but dogs and swine have no receptivity for either. However, we avoid all injudicious obtrusiveness, and withhold our hands where there is an implacable hostility. As the Lord has called men by their right names, so the truth of God is for him who can receive it. The Lord Jesus sets it forth—he reveals it without respect of persons. On the one hand, he has said, Give not that which is holy unto dogs, nor cast your pearls before swine; and on the other, Ask, and ye shall have that which is holy; seek, and ye shall find the pearls—righteousness and its law; knock, and ye enter *de factis*—having the two former.

It is all-important, therefore, to be rightly assured in this matter. We can afford to be in error in everything but this. It involves such awful issues, that every other consideration, at the best, must merge in it. Have I asked? Have I sought? Have I knocked? What is the answer? But we would ask, What does this order denote? We must at once repudiate all such puerile explanations as asking for a street, seeking a house, and knocking at the door, for these words have the closest relation possible to the whole sermon.

This asking, as we have just seen, has special regard to Christ. To ask, is from *a sense of need*. It is the inward desire for deliverance from all that is not of the Father, that Christ may be all and in all—a desire which, from the nature of things, is answered before the words pass the lips. (Is. lxxv. 24.) Yea, it is the thing itself that asks, for he that asketh, receiveth. Then we seek, which has a special regard to the Holy Spirit. If we know Christ, we then seek the pearls, and we possess the Spirit of life. We first realise our freedom. But God has, in our redemption, set us free, and we ignore it, if we do not make it practically effective. The Spirit is not far from any one of us, for he is poured out upon all flesh; therefore, he that seeks finds. To knock, is the practical knowledge of these truths, which are ours only so long as they constitute *the law of our life*. It is not sufficient to possess Christ and the Spirit; we must live in them—so, walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, for he that *doeth truth cometh to the light*, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God. These unspeakable blessings, so freely and so fully bestowed, are possessed by those who ask, who seek, who knock: for he that asketh receiveth; he that seeketh findeth; to him that knocketh it is opened.

It is a withering Christianity that makes God a respecter of persons—that, in the midst of these life-bestowing realities, talks of a narrow election, effectual calling, an irresistible and indefectible grace, which, indeed, cannot be proved by any portion of the Word of God. Awful is the danger of such teaching. We should remember how a professing religious people thought that God's presence was limited to the temple, and there dwelt among an exclusive few, when they might have learned, if they had not been wilfully blinded to the truth, that their degraded and demoralised condition taught that they had no ground whatever to restrict his mercy, which is as free as his will and his love, for in him all nations are blessed. And thus Stephen testified, notwithstanding the bitter prejudices of his hearers. God, he said, dwelleth not in temples made with hands: as saith the Prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool. What house will ye build me? or, *what is the place* of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things? The house of God is the soul of man, built up into Christ Jesus. All are from his hand. Then

let us take care lest, in our overweening conceit, we build him a house, and we determine *where* he shall rest.

Ask, seek, knock—these are for all. May the cutting irony of the Prophet find its way into the rooted prejudices of those whose teaching practically ignores the Father of the spirits of all flesh.

9. In relation to the kingdom of God and his righteousness, every man is either a son, a hypocrite, a dog, or a swine; while to us all, God is a Father, and all creation attests his great name. Then does he give us a stone or a serpent? Is he the author of the hard adamantine heart that resists the truth? Has he begotten in us the old serpent, the devil? If we are evil, does it proceed from him? Do we not well know that it is evil that ever concentrates itself against his kingdom and his righteousness? Yet is he mindful of us, and has visited us even with his great salvation.

He reveals himself, and in that revelation he has met the spiritual need of all men. An earthly parent can have no pleasure in the conduct of that son that would annihilate his paternity; for he would rather that he should honour it, and enter into the fulness of its blessings. Shall sin, then, stay the hand of God, our heavenly Father? It cannot. He has met the necessity of all men, attested by the exhortation, to ask, to seek, to knock, and so enter into the possession of what is. Let us take care lest we mutilate the truth of God; for if we make him other than what he has revealed himself, we contradict the words of Christ, and give to man a stone for bread, a serpent for a fish.

What argument, then, can be more forcible than this appeal to our experience, and which is of such universal application? What man of you is a father, &c.?—an unanswerable argument against those doctrines that narrow the Paternity of God. Wherever man exists, he attests a human paternity, and this the divine. And so rich and so abundant is the provision made for man's spiritual necessities, that the rain and the fruitful seasons are continual witnesses. Thus, the grace of God has from the first preceded every man. It is monopolised by no man, sect, or party. From the beginning, Christ, the Son of God, was constituted heir of all things, and herein was the revelation of the Father. He does not, then, particularise for whom his grace was especially given. Such a partiality would destroy his Paternal character. Wherefore, the

Lord asks, What man is there of you, who if his son ask bread, will give him a stone? Bread is the staff of life, the fitting emblem of him who meets man's spiritual need. If he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? The Lord uses this imagery for the sake of life, and that life in relation to water, without which it would die. Moreover, it is a striking testimony to the abundance of the blessing of grace—the waters swarm with life. However, there is still a further idea conveyed by these two necessary things, as representing the essential principles of God's kingdom—they must be eaten, digested, assimilated. So must Christ and the Spirit, that we may become one with the Lord in his sufferings and resurrection. Here, then, we ask, we seek. In asking, we realise our death in Christ—our redemption. Then we seek, and in seeking we realise the Spirit of life within us.

Since no father, if his son want bread, would give him a stone; if he want a fish, would give him a serpent; much less, then, would our heavenly Father withhold from any the bread sent down from heaven—even Christ. No; he cannot. He would not ignore his own great and holy name, and give him that which would make his desolation more awful. Will he, then, withhold true life—the Spirit of life, and, instead, give him the serpent—the old serpent, the devil, the destroyer of all life, human and divine? How could he? His words are now as of old. What he said to the Israelites he says to all men: I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins; return unto me, for I have redeemed thee. But alas! man will not seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Therefore, sin is upon him, and rests upon all who fail to go up to the perfection of the truth; not only in asking and seeking, but also in knocking—that is, in the indwelling of Christ and of the Holy Spirit; so living in holiness and in love before God.

11. If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children—and this evil does not prevent you fulfilling the duties of a parent—how much more, then, will your Father in the heavens give good gifts to them that ask him? Evil cannot stay his hand. Then let no evil, or anything, hinder us from realising the highest privilege, the greatest blessing that can belong to any creature. In the two blessings of a universal Father, in the common and abundant produce of the earth and waters, we see the common

food of man. No exclusive ground did the Lord take when he would feed the multitudes. He ever found handy a few loaves and fishes. These images attest the abundant grace of God. But towards this grace man presents a hard heart—no good ground to bring forth these gifts of God. His heart is become as adamant, and the only life is that of the serpent. So man is evil. Yet he knows how to fulfil, as regards this life, the paternal relation, supplying necessary wants. Then what shall a heavenly Father do but give that which destroys the hard heart, and casts out the serpent? He gives Christ and the Spirit in the place of both.

12. Therefore, all that ye would that men should do unto you, do ye to them. This is called a golden rule. So it is. But let us take care that we do not rob these words of their deep significance, by giving to them a vapid and unmeaning sense. A son wants bread and fish, the common food of men. His desire is that his father should act according to his name. But the holy and righteous Father has magnified his great name in meeting *his spiritual necessities*. Then what he would that the Father should do unto him, let him do also unto the Father—magnify his sonship, go up to the full realisation of his adoption, as parallel with the Paternity, reveal the Father, and so be perfect as his Father in heaven is perfect. If the Father, in the manifestation of himself, has exhibited his holiness and love that we might be holy as he is holy, perfect as he is perfect—and we desire this as our true peace and joy—we must manifest the same in all the relations and duties of life, and so render to God the things which be God's. Thus Stephen, when his murderers were stoning him, prayed for them. He did what the Lord had already done for him. He, then, who knew the fearful agony of evil, triumphed in the greatest hour of his trial, and desired for them what he would they should do for him. Could he do more? Could he, in the activities of that holy love, do less? If a murderer's eyes were open to see the fearful truth what he is, would he not recall the past if he could? Would he not desire his victim, if it could be done, to forgive him, to pray for him? And so Saul of Tarsus—the murderer and persecutor, who slew the faithful servant of the Lord by the hands of all the others, which he set at liberty—never forgot that prayer. Throughout his Christian experience he cherished a remembrance of that act of the faithful man of

God, who, despite the wrong-doing of others, did for his murderers what he would have desired for himself were he in their position.

Then, are there any strangers to Christ and the Spirit? If they be such, they are, before God, murderers and adulterers. Then let us pray for them. Let us not condemn them, but see clearly how to pull out the mote, and restore them to the embrace of the everlasting Father, even at the sacrifice of all earthly considerations. This is the Law and the Prophets. Who, then, shall say that the Sermon on the Mount is not the teaching of the Law and the Prophets? Yet men do say so. And why? They err, not knowing the Scriptures and the power of God. The Old Testament is the unfolding of those principles which, in the New, are fully made known to us in their universality and comprehensiveness.

13, 14. We practically ask and seek, possessing the holiness of Christ (in a death to sin) and love, the operating law of the Spirit of life. Thus we make manifest the kingdom set upon a hill, and let our light go forth, and glorify our Father which is in the heavens.

Nothing can more truly express the universal tendency of the truth, and that the blessing of God was fully and freely given to all men, than these words of Jesus. Few strive to enter in at the strait gate, but many enter the wide. If we, then, be not hypocrites, dogs, or swine, we know God as our Father, for we have entered the kingdom, and that by the strait gate. What are these two gates by which men enter? What are the two ways to which these two gates respectively open? The imagery is taken from an Eastern city, surrounded by walls, and entered by gates—two narrow on either side of the broad gate. Through this the beasts of burden pass, but if they attempt to pass through either of the former, they must, in doing so, part with their load. Man, by nature, is a slave to sin; he is in the flesh burdened, and heavy laden, and if he would enter the city of the great King, it must be by the strait gate: he must part with his load. If not, he chooses to enter it by the wide gate, taking his load with him, and it leads to destruction.

Nothing more clearly shows that the distinctive teaching of the Lord is lost sight of, than the various expositions given of this simple passage,—as that the strait gate is made so by the swellings of pride; or that the wide gate is so, because so few find

their way into the narrow. What is the strait or narrow gate? Is it not Christ crucified? We enter the kingdom through him. And it would be true of all men who pass not this way, that they are thieves and robbers. Uncrucified, they are yet burdened with sin—the old man still lives and robs God and man. We once heard a sermon, wherein the broad way was described, but the narrow way—the all-important way—was represented as the putting away of certain known *sins*, or evil habits, with the distinctive statement, “*You cannot give up sin.*” This is fatal to the whole Sermon on the Mount. With this view no portion of the Lord’s teaching can be clearly apprehended, as throughout it he lays down as an indispensable obligation the putting off of sin, as in other places, “Except ye carry my cross, you cannot be my disciple.” We must guard against that which may appear taking, simple, and true, yet is as far off from the truth as unrighteousness itself. The gate is not the putting off of the “*exuviæ* of the old man,” but the old man himself. This is the all-important truth. It is not the putting off of carnal indulgences and habits, but rather the nature that creates those indulgences and forms those habits. Having, then, passed the strait gate, we are in the way of righteousness, and, keeping this way, Christ is formed within us. But, alas! men will accept anything about Christ—any doctrines; but to be in him crucified to all and all to them, they will not. They enter the kingdom without the wedding garment—for sin is uncrucified, the enmity is not slain, and Christ, who died for them, is ignored. Whatever be our speculations, our Christianity does not begin till we enter the strait gate; but failing here, we enter the broad way, and so continue, until all that offendeth is thrust out for ever.

If, then, we ask, we enter the strait gate, and our utmost endeavour will be to continue in the way of righteousness. The humbling truth is, the flesh hates the cross, and will not have the Son of David to reign within. The mind may acquiesce in any doctrine; the body may go through any discipline; but the condition indispensable for entering the kingdom is by many, if not almost universally, rejected. The voice of the multitude is not the voice of God. We may, indeed, condemn the specious hypocrisy of religious sentiment and formalism, or the gross sensuality of uncleanness, and yet have no clear and defined

idea of the broad and narrow ways, because we please ourselves rather than follow the simple teaching of the Word of God.

15. It is a sad truth, to be inferred from the Lord's words, that much error is disseminated by false prophets. The term prophet is applied to those who declare the mind of God. This is their primary and distinctive office. False prophets teach a lie. They are prophets of the lie. We cannot mistake the emphatic language of the Lord. It matters not what men teach, to distinguish them from one another in their sectarian and party differences, by which they scatter the fold of Christ, but it is all-important whether they put Christ crucified at the threshold of the kingdom. If they have not entered themselves by this door, they are thieves and robbers;—they are ravening wolves, leading men into the broad way of destruction. They are, indeed,—however popular—however taking their discourses,—lying prophets. They ignore the condition indispensable for developing the spiritual life in man. They come as sheep—as of the fold of Christ—when, from their true and inner condition, they are but ravening wolves: they scatter, they destroy the fold. If we have, indeed, followed the teaching of this Sermon on the Mount, we are prepared for the warning of Christ, and may discern these false prophets by the stern realities of the truth. We should feel that not only our own interests, but those of God and our fellow-men, are at stake; that they who pervert the Word of God, rob us of those truths which even Nature herself teaches.

They come, then, not as wolves, but as sheep, and their teaching is acceptable to libertines, pleasure-seekers, and dishonest men, as to the intellectual and sentimental, for they suffer any amount of scolding, and take it as part of the Gospel; but will not hear the solemn verities of the Lord's sermon. "Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophecy unto you; *they make you vain*; they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord. They say unto them that despise me, the Lord hath said ye shall have peace. And they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of their own heart, no evil shall come upon you. For who hath stood in the counsel of the Lord, and hath perceived and heard his work? Who hath marked his word, and heard it?" Are not the people even now vain? Do they not talk of the popularity of their minister, whose

teaching is after the imagination of their own hearts, instead of enforcing the truths the Word of God reveals. They promise peace, where there is no peace. They say, no evil shall come upon you, even while they ignore the cross of Christ.* They do not make the Sermon on the Mount the standard of their teaching. They pervert the words of the Lord, saying, "Ye cannot be perfect;" or, uncrucified to the world, they, for worldly consideration, even for power and the praise of men, take upon themselves the tremendous responsibilities of the Shepherd's office. However, they are here reminded that the sheep's clothing, and ravening wolf within, is not only contrary to nature, but a very specious form for destroying souls.

16. What should be the fruits of those who are in Christ's stead—Ambassadors for God? They are not to be found in the difference between *social* virtues and their corresponding vices. The Lord intimates their nature, saying, Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? They do not. Neither can we obtain the self-sacrificing, never-failing love of God from the depraved nature of man. The truth is applicable to all. There is no affinity, no connexion, between the ravening wolf and sheep's clothing, any more than between the thorn and the grapes, the fig and the thistle; but there is between the life of the tree, the sap, and its fruit. The fruit is the outcoming of the inward life, and it will be in their fruits that ye shall know them. Of this fruit we are not in doubt. The Lord's words imply, that we know what it should be; for we do not gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles. All men are part of the true vine—bearing or not bearing fruit. They who do not bear fruit, have no affinity with the life within. Of the vine it is said, "Son of man, what is the vine tree? is it more than any tree—a branch which is among the trees of the forest? Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon? Is it meet for any work?" The wood of the vine is nothing; not so the life, which comes forth into fruit. What is the fruit of the vine, which God looks for? It is judgment and righteousness, manifested in love. And the fig-tree, expected to

* The eloquence of great men is *lauded*, is *patronised*, thereby the old Adam pleases itself, and so the cross of Christ is made of none effect. (1 Cor. i. 17.)

have fruit always, whether it be the time of figs or not, conveys the accessory idea that that love, the operating law of righteousness, the outcoming fruit of the Spirit of life, *never faileth*. It is its own peculiar attribute. (1 Cor. xiii. 8.)

By their fruits shall ye know them. The depraved nature of the old Adam is but thorns and thistles—expressive of man's corrupt and cursed nature. By their fruits shall ye know them: on the one hand, by the patching of the old garment—in doctrine and a religious formalism; on the other, by a righteousness without judgment, as the preceding condition: so the strait gate is not entered. All are false prophets, who do not follow the Lord Jesus in his teaching. He could not teach other than the covenant of God. What, then, now-a-days, is the qualification for a prophet of the Lord? What does he know of the covenant?—its nature? its character? its comprehensiveness?

17, 18. The Lord having enforced the necessity of asking, of entering the strait gate—putting away thorns and thistles, if we would have fruit according to the covenant—now leads us to contemplate the life which we must seek. It is a mistake to call upon the drunkard to leave off his debasing habit, or the dirty housewife to be clean. No; the bitter root must be uprooted, that it may not so spring up and defile. In social progress, the world keeps its own ground. In witnessing to truth, we must take the ground of the kingdom, and the difference will be, not in degrees of guilt, but in good and evil. When Christianity is planted in the heart, evil habits go, because sin is dealt with. But, when men on social grounds, by external influences, throw off evil habits, it becomes more difficult to land them on the threshold of the kingdom, for they “are neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm.”—Appendix (C).

If, then, we have entered the strait gate, we shall find the fruit—the grapes of Eschcol—a foretaste of the inheritance; then, as truly as false prophets, failing to take the truth of God in its simplicity, and according to the teaching of Christ, bring forth fruit accordingly, for they give that which satisfies the mighty intellect of man—it is the pride of life, as knowledge puffeth up; so shall we, if we possess that one truth, which is ever the stepping stone in the teaching of Jesus, be a good tree, possess the Spirit of life, and bring forth fruit accordingly.

God does not impose restraints. Let the tree be good, and the fruit must be good; and if the tree be evil, the fruit must be evil. At the root, and not at the branches, the axe is laid. We may lop off one and another evil branch, but the tree is the same, and a branch will crop out somewhere else—fresh shoots *according to it* will be made. Judgment begins at the root. If we will not adopt God's way, the tree is cut down and cast into the fire. It is worse than useless. The Spirit then brings forth its fruit, and the flesh its. The Father, in the revelation of himself, has planted all men in the likeness of Christ's death, that they may be in the likeness of his resurrection. If, then, a man *practically makes effective* the death of Christ (Heb. iii. 14), he will be a good tree, and he will possess the sap of the Spirit of life, and will, of necessity, bring forth good fruit; his works will be wrought in God. But if he denies this planting of God, he brings forth the fruit of unrighteousness, even as the ground brings forth thorns, and is nigh unto cursing. Hence, from the inseparable connexion between the fruit and the inner condition, whether of a good or a corrupt tree, by their fruits shall ye know them.

21. The Lord having, by the images of the gate and the good tree, shown what it is to ask and to seek, now enforces, by the most awful sanction, the necessity of knocking; which, in deed and in truth, implies the asking and the seeking. It is our heavenly Father's purpose that we should so knock—that is, be perfect and complete in all his will.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of the heavens. The evil will, as the good, claim this relation to Christ. How, then, are we to discriminate? The test is the will of the Father. No man can do his will in the flesh, but it must be God in him, willing and doing of his good pleasure. We are warned by the beloved disciple to beware lest we be deceived, for there are many Antichrists. What, then, is Antichrist? Not so much one in direct, as in indirect antagonism to—*taking the place of*—Christ. Satan believed and confessed to him, as the Holy One of God. He was not ignorant that this appellation was exclusively Jehovah's (Is. xlii.); nor was he of all it involves, since the only thing that he dreaded was being cast out before his time. He knew that

Christ as the Holy One, as Jehovah, must cast him out. This may be the suppressed fear of multitudes who deceive themselves.

The Lord having spoken of the corrupt tree being hewn down, and cast into the fire, now speaks of entering into the kingdom, and so brings us on to the end of time—which, indeed, does not supersede a present obedience of the truth. Now, we realise what is invisible; then, we shall enter into the full revelation of the kingdom and its glory. Here, in the words of Christ, there is no incongruity: he beheld, with unclouded sight, these things as he spake of his kingdom, under one phase or another. He tells us that at that day, whatever be the interval between their departure out of this world and that from himself, as the Judge of all men, many would be self-deceived, would then attempt to justify themselves in the same delusion in which they lived, and would call him Lord, Lord. But then, these despisers of the strait gate—ravening wolves in sheep's clothing, false prophets, teachers of the lie, corrupt trees bringing forth evil fruit, that would not have God as an everlasting Father, will have him as a consuming fire. Such are not described as men with vicious lives, in open profligacy, or manifest worldliness, for they call him Lord, Lord, and do many things in his name—that is, according to their idea of it. We understand, even from a carnal point of view, what it is to cry, Lord, Lord, as many who, while they are slaves to sin, say, "To my own master I stand or fall." There is but one condition of soul that constitutes Christ our Master. We in truth call him Lord when he is in us and we in him, which cannot be if our lives do not reveal the Father. The one aspiration of a redeemed soul is that the Father, in his will and love, may be seen in all it does.

The Lord says, Some will say, we have preached, *we have cast out devils*—a marvellous statement, since it is the only point where Satan stops—and we have done many wonderful works in thy name. In the repetition of "in thy name," we have a clue to the self-deception that beclouds those to whom the Lord's words apply. It is an error to make these words signify, "We have done this and that by thy authority." The name of anything is not in Scripture what it is in this world of sham and show. There, it signifies what a thing really is, or what it is acknowledged to be; so that to be in the name of another, is to be all that that

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other is. The Lord confessed to be in the name of the Father: he said, I am come in my Father's name, and the works that I do bear witness of me; so that to receive him was to receive the Father. If ye do not receive my words, receive my works, that ye may know that what I do, I do in the name of the Father, who has sent me. Thus, the disciples were sent in the name of the Lord. When they had believed *into* him—had received of the Spirit, who came *in his name*—they did as the Lord said, "In my name they shall cast out devils, speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them." In these two pairs of predictions we have a repetition in outward things, testifying to what that name signified; so intensifying the idea of an inward experience, and a power in the principles of the kingdom—in delivering from evil, and imparting life. The name Christ Jesus, is equivalent to the term Lord. For when he had suffered, and rose again, he was exalted in the glory of the Father, that in the name of Jesus all should bow, and confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father. It was the purpose of the Father to gather all in one into Christ, that they should confess him. So, then, to call him Lord would be to partake of him, and possess the Spirit of life. If we, then, call him Lord, Lord, we profess this—as the Apostle says, No man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. We thus profess our union with him. He is our husband, so to speak, for we are united to him who rose from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. If, then, this be not our experience, and our teaching, it will matter but little what else we profess; we may live in the praises and adulation of those among whom we minister, the Lord knows us not: He will then say, "I never knew you." He knows us only in that union to which Scripture everywhere testifies—*he in us, and we in him*. Else we are only workers of iniquity—*anomia*—lawlessness, without law—even the law of the Spirit, the law of adoption, which flows from the heart without effort, doing the will of the Father.

Then what an awful self-delusion does the Lord here unveil!—men claiming him as Lord, preaching in his name, casting out devils, and doing many wonderful works. Yes, God works by strange instruments: yet, in themselves, they are strangers to Christ—workers of iniquity. The Lord, taking the highest pos-

sible type of *avopia*, shows that all men are divided into two main divisions—those who serve God, and those who serve mammon. Serving mammon, so workers of iniquity, we may reach the summit of human ambition, and call Jesus only Lord; preach the things of his kingdom; cast out devils, and do many wonderful works; but, not having knocked, the Lord will confess—which, according to its etymology, signifies, speak according to what is, according to facts—I never knew you; depart from me. This will be no arbitrary decree. It must be so from the very nature of things. If we know not Christ, we hate both him and the Father. If we love him not, we hate him: there is no middle path. If we know him we love him; and this we do when we ask, seek, knock; for he that asketh receiveth, he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

24. We now approach the close of the sermon. Of the many modes of interpretation, that surely must commend itself which brings into the closest connexion possible the truths of the kingdom forming a consecutive whole—a chain of ideas with no one link wanting, or disproportioned to the rest.

In this exact order and completeness of *spiritual* truths, we have an incontrovertible argument for the internal inspiration of the Word. While the human element, the language, and the style, peculiar to any man is left perfectly free; yet, its truest freedom is in that it is subject to the spiritual man; so that, however peculiar to the individual, it is purged and ennobled by the truth of God, of which it is the vehicle.

Nothing can be more simple than the teaching of the Lord. He is not hampered with the traditionary accumulations of past ages, or the pre-suppositions on faith in the after-thoughts of men. He has taught the nature of his kingdom and of the righteousness of God; how that the former befits us for the requirements of the latter, in the possession of which we look forward for the full enjoyment of a coming hereafter, and which all men have the power to possess. In these concluding words the Lord enounces the universal tendency of the truth. Men fetter their fellow-men with doctrines of a special mercy, and a special blessing, as if God were a respecter of persons. The one condition, enforced by Christ, belongs to every man. It is to carry the cross, whereby he is in the way of righteousness.

Then, as nature is said to abhor a vacuum, so does righteousness, and it fills the empty vessel of the heart. Since these verities of the invisible world are realised only in doing them, no argument can be advanced against them by those who do them not ; nor by the inconsistencies of those who profess to know and to do them. The truth stands intact, let professing Christians be ten thousand times worse than they are.

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, &c. Here we need no apology for works. No man can hear these sayings and obey them, without doing them. He realises what is, and manifests it. Therefore the Lord likens him to a wise and prudent man. He is in Christ Jesus, he is truly wise—he possesses the wisdom and the power of God, and discerns the deep things of God. He is like a prudent man which built his house upon a rock. He adapts his means to this end. He builds upon the Rock. Rock is twice repeated. What is it, then, that indicates him a prudent man? He digs, and he digs deep. He knows the Rock, *and he knows the sand*, which he must clear away. The earthly figure fails to convey the exact truth ; for while he is clearing away the sand he is building upon the Rock—which is Christ, the Son of God ; not Christ only, nor the Son of God only, but both—the Son of the true David, the Son of the true Abraham. Then the rains, floods, and winds will not only attest the stability and immovability of his building, but, in the perfect providence of God, will keep his foundation clear of the sand. The rain, with the floods as the abundance of it, is the judgment of God in Christ (p. 164). The winds assist this. It is known that, when frost, which is the opposite of the sun's heat, seizes the young vegetation, if the winds do not dry the plant, the sun will scorch it. So is it with us. But if we be in Christ, and anything arises to nullify him, and so check our spiritual life, then trials come in order to remove it. But that which is necessary to the wise man will be destruction to the unwise. Hence, he will take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in distresses, in persecutions, for when he is weak, then is he strong.

The Apostle tells us that there is but one foundation laid. Then, let every man take care how he builds thereon. Some, with a clear and distinct apprehension of it, build precious stones,

gold and silver—they lay up a heavenly treasure—a precious and enduring reward, for they build a holy temple for the indwelling of God. Others, who fail to perceive the one important element in Christ's teaching, build upon it that which is perishing. The foundation and the building are one. This the wise master builder recognises, but the others do not. We show that we do build upon this foundation, not by the superstructure raised, but by the fact *that it and the foundation are one*. So, then, what the Rock is, such is the superstructure—Christ Jesus, the one *living* foundation of the *living* stones of the spiritual house. (1 Pet. ii. 4, 5.)

He who hears these words of the Lord and does them not, is made like to a man that built his house upon the sand. And what is this sandy foundation, which enables the builder to make such a fair show? If we have followed the teaching of the sermon, we shall not adopt that exposition of it that makes it signify the opinions and notions of men. The sandy foundation is the old Adam—the flesh. This is lost sight of, because the important truth which runs throughout the whole discourse—Christ crucified, lifted up in the heart, a practical reality, is not known. There is, in truth, but one foundation, for the sand is no foundation at all; this the whole sermon verifies. Every man, however, is building, but the distinctive feature of the one class is, they clear away the sand, digging deep; of the other, they do neither. It is a striking imagery—the one would have the rock without the sand; the other will not part with the sand. Hence they never have the rock.

However grand be the superstructure, it is one with the sandy foundation. But when, at last, all this labour shall be tested and tried by the searching eye of him who sees not as man sees, at that time when the heavens shall be folded as a scroll, and the elements melt with fervent heat—when heaven and earth shall pass away, how great will be the fall! how unexpected! how contrary to the conceits of men, when that which was so admired and extolled will crumble away, and the veil of self-deception will for ever be removed! for the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

28. The people were deeply impressed by the Lord's teaching. He taught them as one having power. The truth itself is power.

It cannot be gainsaid. Such was the character of his teaching. It was of one who knew and understood—yea, who realised the things of which he spake. His words were the utterance of his life and experience; they expressed realities, as he testified, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen. This requires no ornament, or meretricious aid. The Lord was no expounder of the mere letter, but a witness to the Spirit of the Word.

CHAPTER VIII.

1 WHEN he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.

2 And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if
3 thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth *his* hand, and
4 touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy
5 was cleansed. And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy
6 way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded
7 for a testimony unto them.

8 AND when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a
9 centurion, beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick
10 of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come
11 and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that
12 thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my ser-
13 vant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers
14 under me: and I say to this *man*, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come,
15 and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth *it*. When Jesus
16 heard *it*, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto
17 you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you,
18 That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with
19 Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the
20 children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall
21 be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go
22 thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his ser-
23 vant was healed in the selfsame hour.

24 AND when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother
25 laid, and sick of a fever. And he touched her hand, and the fever left her:
26 and she arose, and ministered unto them.

27 When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were pos-
28 sessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with *his* word, and healed
29 all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias
30 the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare *our* sick-
31 nesses.

32 NOW when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he gave command-
33 ment to depart unto the other side.

34 And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee

20 whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air *have* nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head.

21 And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go
22 and bury my father. But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.

23 And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him. And,
24 behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was
25 covered with the waves: but he was asleep. And his disciples came to
26 *him*, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish! And he saith unto
them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked
27 the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!

28 AND when he was come to the other side, into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs,
29 exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of
30 God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time? And there was
31 a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding. So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the
32 herd of swine. And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.
33 And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told
34 every thing, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils. And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought *him* that he would depart out of their coasts.

1. JESUS now descends the mountain, and great multitudes *follow him*. The Lord has healed all mankind, for he is come, and restored all things. These multitudes, being then duly instructed, realise the truth, and follow him.

A number of miracles are here recorded; they are not redundant. Whether there be miracles, parables, precepts, reproofs, narratives, or history, all are subservient to the truths attested in the Sermon on the Mount. And every successive description presents a phase of the truth, or an accessory idea, confirming what precedes it.

Miracles or signs do not attest the mere humanity or divinity, or even the authority, of the Lord Jesus. They are simply outward expressions or signs *of the kingdom of God and his righteous-*

ness, revealed in Christ, the Son of God, and they attest not only the nearness of that kingdom, but also how it is apprehended and possessed. (John xx. 31: 1 John v. 1, 4, 5, 11, 12.) All visible things are subordinated to the invisible. In this universal law, all creation becomes one vast testimony to the atonement. But where it is not so, there sin exists; and this, alas! is found in the human heart.

Miracles were sensible and striking facts attesting spiritual truths, even as all nature attests the invisible. If we receive not miracles, how shall we recognise regeneration in the soul of man? If we will not receive earthly things, how shall we heavenly?

Whatever may be alleged of the insufficiency of the testimony of miracles, what is there against the obvious fact, that, in all ages, under all circumstances, in little and great matters, miracles attest the universal principles of the kingdom? In those of the Lord Jesus, we see the creature obeying this universal law, or being delivered from what is abnormal. So, then, the question does not turn upon our antecedent convictions, but on the nature of things—the relation of the visible to the invisible. They are most natural as the outward and sensible expressions of inward and *corresponding* spiritual verities.

If it be objected against miracles that God governs the world by fixed and known laws—Well; it is so, only as it shall conduce to the well-being of man. His glory is seen, not in the investigations, however subtle, of science, but in the exaltation of his creature. God in nature and God in providence is one, while miracles attest more prominently his gracious purposes to man. The believer sees God in all his ways—not as some awful, mysterious Being, but as a redeeming God and loving Father. Then, if it be necessary, however vast be the scientific knowledge, however severe and accurate the critical acumen, however conclusive the inductive skill, to convince such of the invisible kingdom and the righteousness of God by an extraordinary sign, would not the exception prove the rule? For, while the most scientific contend that the world is governed by universal, fixed, and known laws, yet, not believing, miracles give a very prominent attestation to the very same principles, even as Nature herself is patiently and unceasingly doing.

They are not merely external evidences of Christianity, but

teach men to experience what is—which possessing, by *the greater revelation of the Word of God*, they would have a far greater evidence than miracles ever can be, even as the substance is greater than the sign or shadow. Thus, Christianity is no more dependent on miracles than the faith of Abel.

Miracles, then, are highly probable, not on theistic principles, but on the relation of God, as a Father, to his creature—in adoption: to which law, indeed, all nature is subordinate; which is now in the throes of parturition, awaiting the manifestation of the sons of God. Miracles attest this—a manifest removal of the curse in the revelation of the Father; even as the Lord said, “If ye believe not my words, believe my works, that ye may believe into him that sent me. The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works, and they bear witness of him.”

The outward and visible life of the Lord Jesus, from his baptism, not only attested *proleptically* his death and resurrection, but revealed what he, as our true Melchizedek, is ever doing in the midst of men. The Gospel sets forth what he *began* to do. The Acts and Epistles reveal what he is doing, and continues to do, throughout the world and all time. He rules over the kingdoms of the earth; and in the events of life, as in life itself, may be continually seen his invisible spiritual operations, as carried on in the kingdom of God and in the souls of men. Hence, all nature may be truly called a miracle or sign; all her manifestations being subject to the gracious purpose of God—the revelation of his own Paternity. Then, what is said of the Sabbath may be said of all visible things—they were made for man, and not man for them. And thus the invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.

2. The leper, with his healing, indicates what we are through sin, and what through Christ. The whole of this chapter illustrates the asking (ch. vii. 8). We herein clearly see what it is to ask, for he that asks receives. We are taught that not only one came, but that multitudes followed him—so, realising this healing, would be able to carry out the truths taught in the Sermon on the Mount. This leper expressed the condition of the multitudes—of the whole nation (Isaiah i. 5, 6), yea, of the world—and how, in the exercise of his own free will, man can *come to Christ*.

Let us take care that we keep free of all parties and sects, with their exclusive dogmas, lest we import into the words of the Lord Jesus what is not there.

The distressing and inveterate disease of leprosy separated men from their fellows, banished them from the usual places of concourse—the city, the market, and the house of God. However small at its commencement, it soon covered the whole body, and extended inwardly to the bones and the marrow, till joint after joint fell off, and the body fell to pieces, a mass of dissolution and decay. This disease is indigenous to the East, South Africa, and the islands around. It presents for our contemplation and consideration two things—separation and corruption. It was the symbol or corresponding sign of sin. Every malady witnesses to evil affecting the soul; while the remedy attests that sin, disease, and death are its abnormal condition.

Leprosy is incurable by man; but, when cured, it taught that God alone heals him from the plague spot of evil, since he alone, and in himself, meets the necessities of the soul.

What, then, is sin? What is this awful disease—the common inheritance of man? Men, indeed, understand sin only as they see it in another, and, in their hypocrisy, in their self-complacency, would take the mote out of a brother's eye, and not see the beam in their own. As truly as the Spirit of God dwells in a man who is regenerate, so truly does the spirit of evil dwell in the flesh of the unregenerate.● Our depraved nature is a receptivity for evil. In it we conceive and bring forth unto sin. (Jas. i. 14, 15.) It appears that until Christ is a reality in us, sin holds empire over the whole man. It is in the flesh, and, united to the soul, begets after its own likeness. But when it is cast out, and the whole man restored—body, soul, and spirit—then sin assails him in and through the flesh, drawing him aside by quickening desire, and it conceives, which, if not at once overcome in Christ, comes forth into sin, resulting in the death of the soul, and the Spirit of God is quenched. Sin, then, is not merely a disease, but a real thing within. And when its law works in the flesh, it is ever reproducing after its own likeness. We may refer simply to a few passages to support this view. (Rom. vi. 13; viii. 3: 2 Cor. v. 21: Rom. viii. 10: 2 Cor. iv. 11.) Since, then, man has fallen, and God has, in Christ, restored him, sin is described negatively, thus:

All unrighteousness is sin—a condition that belies the Paternity of God; what is not of faith is sin—the same condition, as it respects the Christ, the Son of God, being without him; again, sin is the transgression of the law—that is, the holy love, the operating principle of the Spirit of life dwelling in us. We must, then, possess the Trinity—the fulness of God—and witness to them in righteousness, faith, and love, as to lack any one of these is sin. If, then, we fail of the blessing of Jehovah, according to his purpose, we are only of our father the devil, in antagonism to the covenant of his grace. The Scriptures record how that, according to his eternal purpose, the Father hath revealed himself. (Eph. i. 10—13, and Luke xv. 31.) But he who lives in the flesh is a servant, and only a servant. He may discipline himself, and be blameless in the outward law and letter of the commandment; but he is only a servant, and that to sin. But if he be a son, he lives in the Spirit of the Son, and abideth ever in the house and family of God. This is the Lord's teaching (John viii. 32—35, 44)—showing that he who lives in the flesh is of his father the devil, while he who lives in the Spirit is of God. The devil was a liar and murderer from the beginning. He beguiled our first parents, and they fell. They fell from adoption, in which they were created. They were restored in a new creation; therefore, the old must be put away, which, like Satan, cannot be restored. Failing, then, *to ask*, to make effective the grace of God, that which he has already given, *in Christ*, is to determine our hereafter, as it is said: He that is unrighteous, let him be unrighteous still; he that is filthy, let him be filthy still. He that is righteous, let him be righteous still; he that is holy, let him be holy still. And thus the soul obeys the instinctive law of its being. If it depart this life unrighteous, because unclean, separation and corruption must be its everlasting portion—of which, what imagery can be more striking and more dreadful than that used by the Lord Jesus? Where is there a separation so awful as that of being thrust out into outer darkness? For who can tell into what illimitable parts of the universe the light of the glorious orb of day travels? Who can tell how far into the fathomless abyss of space the subtle influences of gravitation pass. But God is light, ineffable light, and his holy, never-failing love is drawing all men unto himself. Then, how awful will be

that separation, that darkness, into which this light penetrates not, and which will be beyond the influence—the attractive power—of the boundless love of the Holy One!

And with regard to his condition of corruption. It will be sadly unchangeable, for the Lord says, Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. These two scavengers of corruption remove the offending carcase—a putrid, loathsome mass—thrown into the Valley of Hinnom. But such is the corruption of the unrighteous soul that it will never cease, nor the worm die, nor the fire be quenched. When we know the Father, we can contemplate these awful truths without shrinking. If he willeth not the death of a sinner, and his boundless love has and does manifest itself, we can leave the eternal condition—the destiny of all men—to him; only let us be careful that we do not dishonour him, disregarding the eternal and solemn verities of the kingdom.

There is a remedy: it is an effectual one. The leper says, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. This is error with truth. The Lord had healed the multitudes. He had declared that will which requires no “if.” It is for every man to realise what is. What is, then, defective, according to the views of men, is rectified in the following miracles.

The leper is not ignorant of his condition. While the children of Israel witnessed, outwardly, to redemption, he represented them as a seething mass of corruption. (Isa. i. 4—6.) Let the condition of any man be the vilest—the filthiest that sin can make it—there is a remedy, and this miracle makes it known. Is it, then, the will or the power of the Lord? “If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.” The salient truth is not in either. The Lord was truly willing: he fulfilled the Father’s will; he took our nature in all its sinfulness, and endured it, suffering every indignity; he endured the cross, despising the shame. And he was invested with all power in heaven and in earth; he manifested it against all adverse power. He destroyed sin, burst the bars of death, and brought life and immortality to light. However, the remedy is in *the touch*. Leprosy represented the soul’s corruption and separation from the Father; and the touch was the outward sign of the atonement—of being one with him in the removal of the separation and corruption.

The touch of Christ is immediate healing. It is union and

oneness with him. He healed the multitudes of whatever disease, that they might follow him, and manifest the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

In the Pentateuch the condition of the leper and the law of his cleansing are followed by a further and fuller description of uncleanness, and separation, and atonement. The leper, as such, is in a state of uncleanness and separation: he is, however, admitted again to the privileges of God's people upon certain conditions. Two birds are taken: no imagery, in all its details, could more clearly set forth the principles of the covenant than this. The two birds must be clean: one is to be killed *in an earthen vessel*, over running water. It is the death of the old Adam, through the cross of Christ. Then the living bird is dipped in the blood of the other. This blood represents the life—the life of the Son of God. The water and the blood set forth the cleansing by death, and a new life imparted. But cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop must first be taken with the living bird before it is dipped in the blood. The *incorruptible holiness* of God meets the *deep-dyed* sinner in the cross of Christ—in *the bitter experience of the crucifixion* of all nature's feelings and affections. The living bird is now the subject of a new life, consequent upon that death; and the bathing of the living bird is identical with sprinkling the blood, denoting oneness with it. The living bird, then, set free, represented the restoration of the individual from his uncleanness to all the blessings and privileges of the family of God.

This is confirmed by other precepts, indicating the nature, order, and appropriation of this cleansing. In the two chapters (Lev. xiv. & xv.) other and more frequent forms of uncleanness denote the universal truth, how that man is separated from his God by reason of uncleanness, which is, however, followed by the atonement—the scapegoat, bearing away the sin and sins of men; while the other goat, by its blood, in which is the life, being brought into the holy of holies, and the blood being sprinkled according to the covenant upon the mercy seat and the place before it, represented the true life consequent upon a death—even as the Lord entered once and for ever into the holy place of all.

The touch, then, is the realisation of the atonement—the partaking of Christ crucified, whereby the leprosy departs.

It is said that, as a preliminary requisite, there must be a propitiatory sacrifice. What is meant by this? Is it that a vicarious offering has been made in the form of a commercial equivalent, to appease the wrath and satisfy the justice of God? There was, indeed, *a vicarious suffering*, but what is a vicarious punishment? Is it the guilty making satisfaction to offended justice? How can this be done, and who are the guilty that can do it? Are these claims of justice to be met by making the pure and holy vile and diabolical? Can justice put forth such a claim as vicarious punishment? Nay, more: is there such a term as justice calling for the death of Christ to satisfy it, found in the Bible?

It is said that the word כפר signifies a pacification of wrath, as well as a covering for sin. How can the wrath of God be pacified? Can God be reconciled to sin? No; sin must be destroyed—purged away. The wrath of God abides ever against sin. The Christian would never attempt to pacify that wrath, for God is ever the same. He hateth iniquity, and cannot bear to look upon it. How, then, is sin covered? To attempt to cover sin is sheer hypocrisy. The word כפר, in the Old Testament, is rendered ransom, reconciliation, propitiation, atonement. Whatever may be intended as the distinctive meaning of these English synonyms, it is evident from the original and LXX. equivalents, that they are almost, if not quite, identical. Paul, speaking of “a price paid,” doubtless refers to the ransom, or half shekel of the sanctuary, which was paid by every man, rich and poor, and signified that a ransom *was provided*, and must be appropriated as such. It was a price paid. When God requires us to buy of him, it is not to give, but to part with something. Jesus was rich, but he became poor for our sakes. He was in the form of God, possessed the attributes and perfections of God, but, divesting himself of them, he was in the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a man, he became obedient to death, even *the death of the cross*. Thus he parted, not only with all he possessed, but with what he was made to possess, and so paid the ransom. *The Jew paying the ransom was the appropriation of Christ crucified*. Thus Isaiah writes, I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour. I gave Egypt for thy ransom. The covenant is for the Egyptians, as for the Jews; yet in this

remarkable expression God taught the Jews how, and in what, he was their Saviour. He gave the Egyptians as vessels of dishonour ; “They were made sin”—that is, through them all men were taught that evil ; yea, every enemy, according to the ten plagues, the sign of totality, was destroyed, culminating in the destruction of the first-born ; and so of Pharaoh and his hosts. And now the Son of God—Jehovah, as the Christ—is our ransom. He is truly made sin, and accursed for us. He dies that sin in him might be destroyed, the enmity slain, and that we, *in him*, in newness of life, might serve God. In parting with all—all that is in the world (1 John i. 16)—by the cross of Christ, we appropriate the truth. Paying the ransom is, according to the nature of it, the appropriation of it. So the leper realises the truth, of which the touch is the symbol, and, as appropriating it, he parts with the leprosy. And thus we, in union with Christ crucified, part with sin and every enemy, and so we appropriate him. The grace of God places all men in union with Christ, but every man must appropriate the truth, else he is one with Belial. This is reconciliation. God is not, then, reconciled to man, but man to God ; and this in Christ, who is our propitiation. We, possessing in Christ not only redemption, but in the Son of God the divine life, are cleansed from all sin. It is at the mercy seat, כפר that God meets man—in the LXX., *is known* to him. (Exod. xxv. 22.) There he takes him into Deity, or imparts of his nature, so that he is one with God, and this is the full atonement. The mercy seat being sprinkled signifies thereby a oneness, not only in the putting away of sin, but in the possessing of the fulness of God as our present and everlasting inheritance. There is a sentimental weakness that shrinks at the idea of Christ being made sin for us. How shall we read the awful condition of indwelling sin if we understand not the nature of the atonement ?—which is not a condonation for sin by suffering a punishment, but a bearing away of sin by becoming what sin is, and the holiness of God driving it away from his presence. In no other sense can we read the atonement in Exod. xxx. and Lev. xvi., borne out by numberless passages throughout the Bible. Moses made an atonement for the children of Israel by realising the one only covenant. The anger of the Lord drove out all the unclean, that God might, by his presence, be fully realised in the midst of them. Aaron, as

high priest, offered as an atonement the burnt sacrifice—the holocaust, and on the altar of incense a daily testimony to the continual presence of Jehovah. So Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures—he was buried, and he rose again the third day. Thus, when we were dead in sin, God quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenlies in CHRIST JESUS. Therefore, if ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, for ye are dead—dead to sin—and your life is in God, with Christ. Being in Christ, then, seek your life in God. God was, in Christ, reconciling the world *unto himself*, not imputing to men their trespasses. Again, Christ reconciled both Jew and Gentile, in one body, unto God, by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby, not, indeed, between Jew and Gentile, but between both and God.

And what is the teaching of the Old Testament prophets? Is it not seen clearly in the healing of Naaman? Why did he dip in Jordan seven times, and then take with him two mules' burden of earth? Jordan, as distinguished from the Red Sea, signified faith in what God had done. The seven refers to the covenant. The earth was the pledge of Naaman's inheritance—the land of promise, the type of Jehovah, in whom he had a death to sin and life to God, to which the two referred.

This miracle of healing the leper, then, is a beautiful illustration of asking and receiving. However imperfect his mode of asking was, *he came to Christ* in his necessity: Be thou clean. He touched him, and immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

4. Tell no man; but go and show thyself to the priest. He was not to talk, but to do. The priest is the representative of God; he not only offers the sacrifice, but also blesses. Paul says, As though God did beseech you by us. To the priest, then, he was to go, who, on the testimony before him, would pronounce him clean. It is thus, *before God*, that our healing must be tested. When he can pronounce us clean, we are so, and which cannot be till we are one with Christ. He is to offer the gift which Moses commanded. It refers to the two birds, which become *expressive* of his true condition, and God has respect unto him and his offering. The Lord does not here enforce the observance of the Mosaic institutions, but the truth itself, and so gives them,

by it, their true and right position. The offering is the outward expression, the outcoming, and so a parabolic testimony to the inward condition which God regards. Then the outward is no longer an abomination. But all the difference lies in the outward imposed, because there is no life, and the outward being the expression of life. So it is only in a practical realisation of the touch of Christ that we can seek and find the righteousness of God.

5. Matthew, while he brings before us the heathen soldier and his servant, grapples with the narrowmindedness of his countrymen, and again shows the universal tendency of the Gospel. The centurion and his servant are to be taken as one. They represent one man. Further, they show man in his utter prostration and powerlessness because of sin, and his freedom of will and power to ask, by reason of the grace of God, in our true Melchizedek.

The centurion comes—like the leper—to Jesus, saying, My servant lieth at home, sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. He is sadly *conscious* of his condition. Questions naturally arise whether we are to regard the centurion and others as knowing spiritually all the covenant demands, or whether this knowledge is in the writer, who moulds his subjects according to his mind. Now, in the providence of God, certain facts arise, which the writer, standing in the kingdom, and contemplating it in all its spiritual reality and integrity, uses in order to set forth corresponding spiritual verities. We must, therefore, lay hold of the spiritual reality expressed or implied.

We are still on the subject of asking. We have said that the centurion and his servant express one subject, one man. His servant is the body, powerless through disease—incipient death, witnessing to sin. All that is short of the divine nature—adoption in the Son of God, is a servant. I speak after the manner of men, says the Apostle, because of the infirmity of your flesh, for as ye have yielded your members *servants* to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members *servants* to righteousness, unto holiness. He asks for the healing of this servant. The Lord says, I will come and heal him. It is the coming of Christ that does heal. It is oneness with him, as we have already seen in the healing of the leper. But the centurion

replies, *I am not worthy* that thou shouldest come *under my roof*. Christ is also a Son over his own house, whose house are we. He dwells in us. He apprehends him not only the Christ, who is the true house in us, but also the Son of God, to *dwell in this house* by his Spirit. Not only does he apprehend Christ Jesus, but feels that he should dwell within. This is his faith. More, he recognises the obligation to have his servant healed before he should enter into his house and dwell there. When Zacchæus was told that Jesus *must abide* in his house, and he received him, then did salvation come, even that very time, to that house, because, in receiving him, he became in truth a son of the true Abraham. Further, the centurion apprehended him as the Christ of God doing the Father's will—that will being power. If, then, the Son of God was to take possession of his heart, that the will of the Father might be his will, then must he be one with Christ; his servant must be healed. He felt himself in authority, and therefore he gave orders, and his servants recognised the authority, the higher power, which they obeyed. He argued from himself by analogy. But his servant is powerless. He desires, therefore, that his servant may be healed, for until this takes place, he cannot himself do the will of God. He well understood the character of Melchizedek, who made his people, through faith, willing in the day of his power. Speak the Word; for the Word would be according to truth. Thus, in the Word, we receive Christ—so, in union with him, are we healed. The Word reveals the truth in us.

10. Jesus marvelled. What a grateful satisfaction was this great faith to the lowly Redeemer. He saw the fruit of his own work. He saw within his own kingdom established a true soldier of the cross. Such great faith he had not found even in Israel. The descendants of him who had prevailed with God to the obtaining of the blessing, should have witnessed to that power that put into subjection all that is of the creature. The centurion magnified the authority with which he was invested, so would he the grace of God in Christ. Then, in this great faith in Christ shall he partake of the fulness of God. He shall sit down in the kingdom with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. What is to sit down in the kingdom with these? Surely it would be only to mock him who had said that he was not worthy that Melchizedek should

enter his house, to say that he should sit down with three men, however distinguished in the kingdom of the heavens. This is not the teaching of Scripture. If the feast of God be to partake of righteousness—the divine nature—then these names signified to sit down with the Trinity in the kingdom of God, and partake of what they partake—that is, to be one with them. While they—*the children*—who possessed the shadows attesting the realities which they ignored, would be thrust out. The Lord speaks the Word, and it gives testimony to the truth: “According as *thou hast believed*, according to thy faith be it done *unto thee*.” The Lord thus teaches, that the centurion and his servant are one man; for no man’s faith is another’s healing. According to *thy* faith is it done unto *thee*.

14. The Bible is a revelation, and according to it we discern spiritual things. In it we trace the covenant in its relation to man—what God is doing, and what man should do. We must, therefore, take the healing of the mother of the wife of Peter as revealing to us, through these three persons, one man.

In the leper and palsied, we see the nature and effect of sin, which is incurable by man, and renders him powerless to serve God, notwithstanding earthly authority and power. Creation’s law is, that the elder shall serve the younger—the flesh the spirit—angels men. But fallen angels possess the flesh, and so rule men.

It was a hard saying for those who had left all and followed Jesus to hear addressed to them, with all solemnity, “I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” God is no respecter of persons, for the everlasting covenant being ordered in all things and sure, cannot be changed. (Is. xlv. 23.) Then, as the leper represented the Jew, and the centurion the Gentile, so here, in and through the individual, we learn that there is no position in relation to Christ, however distinguished, that supersedes that which is for all men.

Peter well understood the relation the woman stood to the man in respect to his *twofold nature*. She is the weaker vessel; and holy women, who took their right place, were *in subjection* to their own husbands. It is through Christ alone that we are holy—by whom we cast down all that would exalt itself against the knowledge of God; for we war not against flesh and blood, but

against principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness within us. Thus, all that is of ourselves, and of sin dwelling in us, must be subject. Hence the latter is cast out, and we serve God. Out of Christ the carnal mind is enmity—it works according to its own law against all that is holy and good; and against Christ in us does it ever strive, as Paul testifies. (Rom. vii. 18; viii. 2.)

Peter, having heard the Lord highly commend the faith of the centurion, is doubtless cast down, but Jesus enters his house, and heals his wife's mother. The wife calls up the idea of the flesh as the weaker vessel. She represents the flesh. How much more so the wife's mother! Thus, if the idea is not intensified, it is thereby set forth in its severe simplicity. She was laid—cast down—sick of a fever. Thus man, by sin, is defiled, is powerless, is destroyed. But for all this, there is the one remedy. Christ enters the house of Peter, and he *touched the hand*—the hand of the woman—and she arose and ministered unto them.

16. We have now, in plain language, what the former miracles teach. But here there is a danger; the letter affords much scope for criticism, and so the corresponding spiritual truths are overlooked. Every man who serves sin is possessed of the devil. Since all men have sinned, they are as the leper, the palsied, and the fevered one. All must come to Christ, as they are, to be healed. His word is the word of power, which the centurion well understood; by it he cast out devils. It is the word of Melchizedek. And because he has driven out the enemy, and healed the sick—for all men, *many come to him*, and they must be healed; else he would be first to break the everlasting covenant, and to deny himself as Melchizedek.

17. But he fulfilled what was spoken by Esaias, the prophet. He took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses. It cannot be said that he partook of the infirmities to which flesh is heir, or the maladies that afflict mankind. Then, how was this saying fulfilled? It is neither the Hebrew nor the LXX. of Is. liii. 4. In the latter it is, "He bore our sins and was distressed; he sorrowed;" in the offering of himself he became sin, and was in the likeness of sinful flesh. But how were these words of the Evangelist fulfilled? They are the index to the whole of Isaiah lii. liii. liv. Christ *was one with us*, that we, in him, might be highly exalted. He was in our stead (*ὑπερ*—Rom. v. 6);—he came under

our burden ; he was in our condition without strength, and in spiritual sickness, that the arm of Jehovah might be revealed. Man oppressed of the devil brought forth unto sin ; but the arm of Jehovah being revealed, he is redeemed, and his exaltation and oneness with God, in a spiritual marriage, follows. “Fear not ; for thou shalt not be ashamed : neither be thou confounded ; for thou shalt not be put to shame : for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more—(this is man in his relation to the covenant, still the purpose of a Triune God stands : man brings forth *children* after the flesh, and is in desolation ; the Jews, as redeemed in their widowed condition, of which their separation was a witness, are barren—there is no true seed). For thy Maker is thine husband ; the Lord of Hosts is his name ; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel ; *The God of the whole earth shall he be called*. For a little while have I forsaken thee ; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment ; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.” Therefore is the Gospel of the kingdom preached and obeyed, and the prophecy is fulfilled ; of which the miracles of Christ, as outward signs of corresponding spiritual experiences, were a witness.

18, 19. A certain scribe now comes to Jesus. As a disciple of Jesus, he would be one built up into the kingdom. Doubtless it was Peter. The passage from the Prophet Esaias speaks of the Gospel, that God was the God of the whole earth, and that it was to be preached. Therefore, he exclaims, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. So characteristic of Peter, so expressive of his impulsive nature, that we can hardly fail to recognise him. How many, in the exuberance of mere feeling, thus exclaim, and count not the cost ? The reply of Jesus not only indicated the condition of the scribe, how that he had not, as yet, realised the cross—and so, the following of the Lord was not the attaching of himself to his person, but it was, nevertheless, a very instructive reproof. The Lord did not lose sight of the prophecy, and the fulfilment of it, as witnessed by the miracles. His object, then, was to bring conviction to the scribe, and, through him, to us, of his truth.

The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests. The

Lord does not refer to these creatures of God without intending some distinct meaning. The foxes burrow in the earth, but the birds are above it, and fly in the broad light of heaven. Between them there is no concord. Man, without Christ, is only a fox. He is opposed to Christ, and all that is of him—as Herod, who did the works of Satan. But Christ has likened himself to a hen that gathereth her brood under her wings from the cruel fox. Thus, then, to the evil and the good, there is a rest. Taking the ground of the scribe, he would say, Will you follow me whithersoever I go? I have no rest; the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. But, taking his own ground, he would truly say, The Son of man hath no rest, because of evil. He is despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, because Jehovah hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. How truly, then, did Peter and Paul seek to make known this salvation of God to the ends of the earth, knowing among men only Jesus Christ and him crucified; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.

In the appellation “Son of man,” is gathered up all that the covenant reveals of him. It refers to him as the Son of the everlasting Father, whom he came to reveal, and to his humanity, as one with the whole human family, and in which he could fathom the deepest depths of human wretchedness and woe, and bestow the ineffable glory of the Father.

If, then, we would follow him, we must be crucified to the world, and the world to us; and so, like the Apostle Paul, forget the things which are behind, and press forward to the prize of the calling of God from on high.

21. Another disciple now comes to Jesus. Doubtless it was John, the younger of Zebedee’s children, who now lay dead, for after this his wife is described as the mother of Zebedee’s sons, implying his death. The Bible sets before us the truth, divested of all that is earthly. We have seen the impulsive Peter, with his idea of leaving all; and now we behold the thoughtful John, with his idea of giving up the relationships of life. He would doubtless signify love to a father was the following of Jesus. The Lord had nowhere to lay his head, but John would lay his father’s head in rest. The paternal relation is the highest; it is

inclusive of all others. And the last filial duty is to follow the remains to their last resting-place. This can happen but once. It is the last sad, mournful duty that a rightly cherished affection feels itself bound to do. Then, does the Lord forbid it? To do so would pervert the teaching of the sacred text. Rather, by it we are taught that when we are one with Christ—our Melchizedek—we are crucified to the world, and the world to us: which necessitates not only a death to all material things, but also a surrendering of the relationships of life, in order to possess higher and holier ones. Follow me, says the Lord, and let the dead bury their dead. Thus, in a way, perhaps, contrary to our expectations and predilections, is the truth forced upon us, and we are to possess it, superior to and independent of any relation or duty on earth.

The use of the term Lord does not imply that this one was a disciple, and the other was not; but rather that he claimed to have a higher apprehension of the mind of Jesus, as in a loving and manly heart he entertained a deeply cherished remembrance of a beloved parent. And it was a congenial soil for those principles—for that holy love, which breathes forth to the everlasting Parent in all his writings.

23. We now are at no loss to perceive the sharp outline of the truth. In the foregoing incidents, we are taught that Christ must be realised, despite the alluring power of visible things, and the claims of human relationships; for at the best *they are but shadows of the true*. In Christ we put them in their proper place. And this also with regard to the providence of God, which might otherwise, at times, be difficult to understand. God is ever faithful to his covenant; but we, in unfaithfulness, ignore him.

Jesus *now enters a ship*, and his disciples follow him. Thus, *we in him and he in us*, so only can we follow him. We are his house, and here, in us, doth he lay his head. Let us only recognise this—apprehend that for which we are apprehended of in Christ—then all the tempests, storms of life, all the powers of evil, instead of destroying us, will subserve the purposes of grace. Calm in the consciousness of an indwelling Christ, we shall grow stronger the more they rage.

But where shall we find these storms and tempests. Surely they are within us; they are the unruly passions and desires, the lusts, the affections of the flesh. In us—that is, in our flesh—dwelleth

no good thing. When we would do good, evil is present with us. Yea ; our adversary is ever rising up and troubling us. As truly as the ship was tossed, and felt the shaking of the storm, so will the Christian be conscious of the presence of evil ; yet, in Christ, and in him only, is there a great calm. We must possess Christ asleep in the vessel—he in us, and we in him. Sleep is the symbol of death, and here of Christ crucified. When we thus realise his presence, then the storm will rage, and the more as we seek to possess him crucified. Still, crucified to all and all to us, the more will the powers of evil strive against us. To awake him is to lose the inner experience of his cross.

It may be interesting to depict the Lord standing in the midst of the foaming waters, in meek majesty, reproving his disciples, and by his word hushing the mighty waves into a mysterious calm ; but what is the spiritual truth the scene conveys ? In a perfect Providence, all things work together for good. So, then, the trials, temptations, adversities that befall us, are permitted to prove us, whether we be crucified to all, whether the creature yet holds us, or not. These things, then, that try us, are not merely outward, they are felt within in the lusts and desires of the flesh. But if Christ be in us, and we in him, then, in the midst of all, we possess a true tranquillity, being superior to all, even as he was, by his death.

It was no trifling storm that shook the confidence of these aged and sturdy mariners. Then may the Christian expect no abatement in the trials of life ; and what are these to the unruly passions within ? But his refuge is to lay firm hold on the promises, that we shall not be tempted above what we are able to bear ; in other words, Christ will be ever present with us. Then let us be partakers of the afflictions of the Gospel, according to the power of God, which ever goes forth in Christ, to the overthrow of all adverse power.

In the midst of the storm they arouse him from sleep. They cry, Lord, save us : we perish. But God's way is not man's way. They know not what a sleeping Christ taught. If they had known, they would not have disturbed him. Their safety was in their possessing him, *and according to him*, and not as they would have it. Man will have Christ, but not as *Christ asleep in the vessel*. What, then, is Christ asleep in the vessel ? What is the hid

treasure? Men may say these are matters of thought, and for consideration; but we say, they are of vital import. Had the disciples known what Christ asleep in the vessel signified, they would no more have disturbed him than the finder of the hid treasure would have failed, after finding it, to have again buried it, in order to appropriate it. We must first understand the words of Jesus, Ask, and ye shall receive, before we can seek in order to find. Then, is it not of the greatest moment that men know what it is to ask? Alas! they live among the tombs, yet know not Christ crucified, *dead, and buried*. Unless this very salient and prominent truth be understood, the healing of the leper, of the centurion's servant, of Peter's wife's mother—the taking of our infirmities, the bearing of our sicknesses, the reproofs administered to the two disciples, cannot be understood. But if they are understood, it is because we have grasped the writer's mind, and have followed its development, which must be according to the truth itself, and which leaves no indulgence to those whose best efforts are only guesses, and mischievous guesses, at the truth. Why should the past—call it the middle or the dark age, if you will—present a painful hiatus between the written Word and the end, when there will be no mistake? Why should not every interpreter of the Word, as every true interpreter must, be able to use the key of knowledge, which is Christ crucified, dead, and buried—for except a corn of wheat *fall into the ground and die, it is alone*—and unlock the Word, and lay bare the kingdom of the heavens? Notwithstanding their exclamation, they are of little—that is, of no—faith. Therefore they are taught the truth only by that which is outward and visible: “Thomas, because thou hast seen, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” That which was, in the providence of God, calculated to develop a mighty faith, through a sleeping Christ, proved in their awakening him that they had none. However, the Lord rebuked them, and testified that where he was—crucified, dead, and buried—there is perfect calm. And so they had the sign, but not the reality. They were building only on the sand, and in the mercy of God were learning this fact.

27. He spake the word, and the elements obey it. With his word he cast out devils; with his word he healed the sick. These men, accustomed to be at the mercy of the waves, now marvel at

what is contrary to their experience. What a blessed comforting truth is here opened up to us, if we can receive it. Why should we not possess an unshaken peace, despite the powers of the rulers of darkness, though the very vessel itself is, to all appearance, even to the most experienced, hardly able to weather it. It cannot sink if Christ be in it *asleep*. And *his word* testifies to this.

They come to Christ and cry, Lord, save us: we perish. How did they expect to be saved, if not by calming the winds and the sea—that is, rendering them powerless? which he now reveals by his Word. How do men in their extremity expect to be saved? Did these men now understand the sign? Do men understand that we are saved only by the way the Word reveals? The Word reveals that we are saved only by the indwelling of Christ, and him asleep in us, and that all the powers of evil are powerless. We may learn this by the sign; but it brings us back to the Word. But these men, while they call him Lord, ask themselves, What manner of man is he that the winds and sea obey him? Well might the Lord draw a broad line between them and the centurion. The centurion knew that his servant could not be healed without Christ coming under his roof—that is, by *his indwelling*. He knew, also, his own utter unworthiness, and so the *free* grace of God. Therefore, he receives his Word as receiving him. It was the revelation of a fact which he in faith made effective, as the result showed. Here, the disciples also possessed Jesus; they had ocular demonstration of his indwelling. The house, the ship, the heart itself, are one and the same thing, and here with the accessory idea of Christ *crucified, dead, and buried*. But they had no faith. They did not rise to the spiritual truth, much less to the appropriation of it. They truly felt their sinfulness, for it was that which made them, like most men, cry out with fear *in extremis*. Had they understood his advent, not to walk on the earth, but that he was, in truth, in the hearts of men, to set all at liberty who, through fear of death—separation from God—were subject to bondage, so meeting their necessities, they would have found his indwelling presence a source of comfort, trust, and hope. But their fears belied the truth. So, instead of falling back upon the covenant of God, according to his Word, they ignore it. There is, then, but one faith. It is Christ Jesus

in us—the Author and Finisher. It begins with him, it ends with him. He is the Alpha and the Omega—Christ the Son of God. Thus we are complete in him.

Further, in comparing these men with the centurion, we see that God is no respecter of persons. The truth is for all; and no position, however exalted, makes a man an authority. Paul, doubtless, learned much from Stephen; so, here, the disciples from the faith of the centurion.

28. In interpreting the following narrative, we do not trouble ourselves about the exact locality, much less the apparent discrepancy between the Evangelists, with respect to the number possessed. Rather, what does the narrative teach? What is the spiritual truth it conveys? Have we here a revelation of invisible realities? or only an historical narrative of *two men*, possessed by devils, being healed?

If the other Evangelists find one sufficient for their purpose, then the spiritual truth is evidently to be sought, not in the letter, but in the revelation. Matthew mentions two, and not without a purpose. He has before him those two who were ready to follow Christ with *uncrucified* hearts (verses 19—21), who cried out, Lord save us, we perish (verse 25).

Let us repudiate a teaching that does not take the ground of the covenant. We are here taught distinctly what is the condition and the end of every one who obeys not *Christ in him*. Whatever may be their earthly position, as before men, their spiritual, as before God, is such only as represented by those possessed by devils.

To one of the two disciples, who, on a subsequent occasion *ignored the cross* of Christ, the Lord's words were simple enough. He said to him, "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those *that be of men*." We want, then, no maudlin sentimentalisms, that would deprive us of a clear apprehension of the truth of God. These two men possessed, represent those who do not ask, who are strangers to a receiving, and so are exposed to all the power of the enemy. If Melchizedek reign not within, then the prince of the power of the air does; and the exceeding ferocity and destructive cruelty of these men attest it.

This miracle, while it represents the condition of those who

neglect the truth, illustrates the willingness of Christ to save, not indeed from mortal death, but from eternal: and it does not conclude without the awful warning of the danger of perishing.

We require no apology for demoniacal possession. Sin is ever cropping out in its most hideous forms, giving unmistakeable evidence of its presence. Then, why should there not be an outward and visible testimony to it? If leprosy was given as the outward sign of the condition of man by reason of sin, then why should there not be of that malady which more distinctly portrays sin itself in its cruel power and unceasing activity? And, if the God-man was seen, touched, handled,—why not the man of sin, who is now invisibly developing himself?

29. In the two men possessed, is the picture of those who ignore Christ—who, with uncrucified hearts, put him from them. They are possessed, and unclean. Their confession is truth: “What is there common to us and to thee, thou Jesus, Son of God?” This must be the confession of all now, or hereafter, who have not Christ in them. The condition of every man is Christ asleep in him, or that of the two possessed. Faith apprehends the former, and casts out the unclean spirits. But as the disciples failed to apprehend the former, their condition is seen in the latter; and there is a reference to them in the two miracles, or signs: the one would follow Jesus whithersoever *he went*, yet cries out with fear; the other would first bury his father, and he also cries out with fear. The two, being possessed, deny Christ—they are in fear—they dread Christ—they dread his power, his coming judgment.

The graphic description of their coming out of the tombs *exceeding fierce*, identifies them with the dead who bury their dead. Being dead, they live among the dead. But the ship with Christ asleep in it, is a death and burial to sin, and possesses a *serene, calm, and holy tranquillity*, notwithstanding it may be assailed by the fierce and ungovernable fury of evil.

The devils believe Jesus as the Son of God, but will not acknowledge him in his Melchizedekian character. They cannot dispute the advent *of the Son of God* to reveal the Father, and to restore all things; but they dispute a present judgment. “Art thou come to torment us before the time.” We have the truth, or we have it not. Christ is not divided, though “Christendom” would

divide him. The Christianity of the day confesses the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, but not the Christ. If Melchizedek, who slays *all* his enemies, be not enthroned on the heart, Satan is. Devils are as orthodox as most—*they believe that Jesus is the Son of God*, and that they will be tormented, but not yet. This is the lie. Self-deceived men do not ask, do not enter the strait gate. They acquiesce in the devices of, are one with Satan; they procrastinate, and this is to perish. The Christianity of the day credits the Word of God, and fights for its historical facts—that Jesus, born of the Virgin, is the Son of God—that he died on the cross, and rose again—and that he will hereafter come to judge the world, when all evil shall be cast out. And, after all, it finds its climacteric in the confession, even of the unclean spirits. So long as it rejects Melchizedek, in his power, it cannot rise higher than this, “Thou Jesus, Son of God, art thou come to torment us before the time?”

The truth requires perfect watchfulness; and since earthly distinctions involve greater temptations, from increased responsibilities, that watchfulness is the more frequently assailed. But where the truth is not, the danger is increased, being most imminent, by a stronger resistance to what is.

We have now clearly and distinctly learned our duty—to possess Melchizedek in all his power, independent of and unaffected by anything of the creature. The two disciples, failing this, are spiritually in no other condition than that signified by the two wretched demoniacs, dead among the dead, and driven by the fierce power of evil. Such, indeed, is the unveiling of the spiritual condition of man in his relation to the inner world. And we are taught, in the healing of them, that Jesus, who rebuked the winds and the sea, and also the evil spirits, and cast them out, will in us also deliver us from sin itself, and all his assaults.

31. We now come to the solution of “a great difficulty.” Why should the unclean spirits be permitted to enter the swine? Failing to apprehend or make effective the truth, we learn what we are in the demoniacs; and in coming to Christ, as the leper did, we learn how the unclean spirit is cast out. All this is seen in the demoniacs. But if we yet obstinately continue in our own way, we are as the swine into whom the unclean spirits enter. Now, a man is of more value than many swine, and so he here learns

that, if he will not believe, he miserably perishes, and in their precipitate headlong course, what is imminent. But, if God yet waits in long-suffering mercy, it is for his salvation. God has no pleasure in the death of a sinner, nor has he in permitting Satan to possess the unclean; nor can heaven be brought down to earth, that it should become a pandemonium.

33, 34. Our attention is now drawn to the citizens of Gadara—men of the world, who have a great interest in their worldly possessions. Are they different from those who cried out in the ship? or from those among the tombs? Rather, are we not led to see how these men of worldly prudence are possessed by the unclean spirit? Can there be a doubt of it; for what is the cry of the whole city? They beseech him to depart out of their coasts. In other words, “Let us alone.” At the loss of worldly things, they will not learn the truth whereby they would count the cross their glory, and by which they would learn the loss of all things. “We know you, but we want not your deliverance,” is the *practical* reply that Christendom now gives.

If man turns away from Christ—from *being perfect* in him—does he not, of his own free will, yield himself to the service of Satan, and so invite him to possess him? Then is he as the swine, and so, from the nature of things, the Lord no longer strives with him. The water could not engulph the ship, but the swine rush headlong to destruction. Sad, indeed, is this condition of men. It is universal. The whole city besought Jesus to depart out of their coasts. Thus, while the Gospel is universal in its tendency, unbelief is almost so; for the character of the world is, according to these men, who practically say, “Depart out of our coasts, for there is nothing common between us and thee.”

CHAPTER IX.

1 AND he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city.

2 And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a
bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be
3 of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the
4 scribes said within themselves, This *man* blasphemeth. And Jesus know-
5 ing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For
whether is easier, to say, *Thy* sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and
6 walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to
forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed,
7 and go unto thine house. And he arose, and departed to his house. But
8 when the multitudes saw *it*, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had
given such power unto men.

9 AND as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew,
sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And
10 he arose, and followed him. And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in
the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him
11 and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said unto his
12 disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? But when
Jesus heard *that*, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a phy-
13 sician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what *that* meaneth, I
will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous,
but sinners to repentance.

14 Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the
15 Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto them,
Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom
is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken
16 from them, and then shall they fast. No man putteth a piece of new cloth
unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the
17 garment, and the rent is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into
old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the
bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are
preserved.

18 WHILE he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain
ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but
19 come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. And Jesus arose, and
followed him, and *so did* his disciples.

20 And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve
21 years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment : for she said
22 within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole. But
Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of
good comfort ; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was
made whole from that hour.

23 And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and
24 the people making a noise, he said unto them, Give place : for the maid is
25 not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. But when the
people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid
26 arose. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.

27 AND when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying,
28 and saying, *Thou* son of David, have mercy on us. And when he was come
into the house, the blind men came to him : and Jesus saith unto them,
29 Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord.
Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.
30 And their eyes were opened ; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See
31 *that* no man know it. But they, when they were departed, spread abroad
his fame in all that country.

32 AS they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed
33 with a devil. And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake : and the
34 multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel. But the
Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.

35 AND Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their
synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing every
36 sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the mul-
titudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and
37 were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto
38 his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few ; pray
ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into
his harvest.

1. WE have clearly traced what it is to ask, to receive ; here it is what to seek, to find.

Faith is to believe Christ, that is, to be in Christ. Our faith overcometh the world ; for in Christ we are crucified to the world, and the world to us. He who thus believes Jesus is the Christ, is born of God. Having Christ, he is one with the Son of God. This is the divine life in the soul, and it is the subject now before us.

Christ asleep in the ship, is the revealed purpose of the Father for all men. And to as many as *receive* him, to them he

gives power to become sons of God, even to them that believe *into his name*.

Jesus *now enters the ship*. He passes over, *and comes into his own city*. What is a city? A corporate body, the inhabitants of a given place. The saints, the holy ones, they who have learned Christ, are fellow-citizens of the household of God. The city of the Gadarenes is opposed to *his own city*; as the world is opposed to the kingdom in Christ. Thus, we may read in all the circumstantial details of his daily life, as in the statutes of the ancient Jewish economy, the covenant of God.

Leaving, then, the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection. We may perfect Christ in us, and so be perfect as regards Christ, but this is not to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect. In order to be such, we must have not only the principles of Christ, but also the true adoption, or sonship—the condition for which is to be in Christ, and then, by the Spirit of the Son, we cry, Abba, Father. Thus Paul enforces it, Though I speak the languages of heaven and earth, declare the mind and will of God, understand all mysteries, and have all knowledge; yea, more, have faith to remove mountains; that is, in Christ, remove every obstacle; yet, not having love—the law of righteousness—I am nothing. When we know the mercy and love of God, that is walking in holiness and love before him, we are only what is commanded of us. (Luke, xvii. 10.)

2. They bring a man sick of the palsy—an expressive figure of the soul, as well as of the body, by reason of sin. Man in sin is dead to God, in Christ he is dead to sin, *but the soul is not yet quickened*. Jesus beheld their faith. They sought, and they found; for God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in the Son; he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. Thus Matthew, independently of others, distinctly teaches the faith the Lord beheld. There is here no obscurity; nor “does he require any one to complete his ideas.” It is said by those who appear to fail in apprehending the simple teaching of the Lord, that the paralytic *had not asked* anything. This is a great mistake; for the position of the miracle in the sequence of ideas implies that *he had asked* and received—that *he* possessed Christ in all the distinctness of his indwelling power.

We can understand the difficulty many feel, who have no certain data for determining who they were that brought the paralytic. If they fail to trace the connected and consecutive order of ideas in the writer's mind, where will they find the key of interpretation? Each writer is to be understood without his contemporary. Then, who are they whose faith Jesus beheld that the paralytic was healed? Mark makes mention of four coming. We can explain Mark when we come to him. Does the faith of any one heal another? Is any man's faith another's salvation? So far from the miracle teaching it, the distinctive teaching of the preceding chapter, as a prelude to this miracle, entirely precludes it. None can seek the Spirit of the Son without Christ. It is God's order, as the order of Melchizedek—King and Righteousness. But this is not seen, and, therefore, is not taught. How, then, shall teachers in Israel understand this sign?

Here, as in the case of the centurion and his servant, "They" and the paralytic constitute one person; else, there is no teaching in the miracle; for we must suppose the complete paralysis of the man, and that he has asked and has received. So, then, being in Christ, he is dead to sin. (Rom. viii. 10.) But the soul is not yet quickened by the Spirit of life. The outward sign of this is the paralytic resting in his bed, borne of others. Thus the soul is in the redeemed nature in Christ who bears it. "They" who bear him, doubtless, are disciples, and so realise the truth of Christ asleep in the ship—are freed from unclean spirits. No man can be a disciple except he carry the cross of Christ. So, then, their faith, as they possess Christ, indicates *that Christ himself bears the palsied soul*; and so seeks the divine nature, even his own Sonship. (Col. ii. 7, 9.) This is the faith Jesus saw. If, then, we have the one, we must have the other, and we cannot have this without that. And so, he says, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.

Be of good cheer implies sorrow because of sin, and a consequent abhorrence of self, but here particularly, as the palsied, inability to do the Father's will. The Lord's declaration was a testimony to a condition of being perfect before God—possessing the kingdom of God and his righteousness, of a man restored to all the privileges of adoption whereby he cries, Abba, Father. If any man sin we have a Paraclete, a Comforter with the Father,

Jesus Christ the righteous; who is our remedy for sin, and in whom we have full remission.

3. There were scribes of the Law and scribes of the Gospel; and they would in nowise differ if they were built up into the *two principles* to which the Law and the Gospel respectively testify. Failing the covenant, they say within themselves, "This man blasphemeth." How could he blaspheme when he declared a truth? The man was now a son, *τεκνον*, begotten, having received Christ, born of the incorruptible seed the Word of God, born of God. Peter and John, doubtless, did not forget this incident. They may have played an important part in it.

4. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" Why should they think evil in their hearts? Had he not come revealing the Father, redeeming man, and blessing him in adoption? Wherefore, then, should they think evil? As scribes, should they not be able to tell from *their own experience* whether it is easier to say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," or to say, "Arise, take up thy bed and walk." Let every one for himself answer the question so pertinently put, whether is easier. To say, Thy sins be forgiven thee, is identical with saying, Arise, take up thy bed and walk. It is a saying according to truth. They are one and the same thing.

He read their thoughts. He knew that thoughts from an uncrucified heart will arise. And they do arise, if we do not draw our doctrinal statements and theories of life from their only source, the Word of God. We ask deliverance from sin; but, if it be possible to stop short here, with Christ, and not go on to perfection, we lapse, we fall away. So, then, until we possess the Spirit of the Son, our sins *are not remitted*. Our condemnation is in not believing *into* the name of the only begotten Son of God. And, thus, Jesus also declared that sins are remitted in adoption, when we do all that is commanded of us.

Paul, with godly jealousy for the Gospel of Christ, says to the Galatians, If any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that *ye have received*, let him be accursed. What this Gospel is he says, referring to himself, "*I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life I now live in the flesh, I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*" This righteousness, in the

indwelling of the Son, comes through putting off the old Adam, and putting on the last in Christ; in whom we have redemption from sin, and through his blood, life, remission of sins, *according to the riches of his grace.* (Eph. i. 7.)

In the healing of the leper, sin is put away. In the palsied one, sins are forgiven in the restoration of adoption. This is the *one faith* throughout the Word of God, which is now clearly brought before us, confirmed by the signs following, and the sending forth of true and faithful men to testify to it.

The answer to the Lord's question will be found, not in the mere exercise of arbitrary power in forgiving sins, or in working a miracle, but in the power to say the one or the other. He could not say to the palsied, "Arise, and walk," without the convenient grace of God being made effective in him, and then only could he say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." For we are righteous, not by what we know, but by what we are. (Eph. i. 5: John i. 12: 1 John v. 11, 12.) Then, whether is easier? The purpose of God is that men should be perfect. He, then, that has received Christ crucified, should possess the Spirit of the Son of God, which is freely given to all. This is the bounden duty of every one, and when he has done all, he has done only that which is commanded of him. Wherefore, until we realise the Spirit of Christ, which is the Spirit of life, and so possess the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, we are nothing. We have not fulfilled, much less kept, the commandments of the Lord, and our sins are not remitted. But if we have the Spirit, we walk in him, we fulfil not the lusts of the flesh. The word is to all, Arise, and walk. To arise is to realise the resurrection life—the new man, created after God in righteousness, and holiness of the truth—Christ, the Son of God, the one foundation laid; and then we take up our bed and walk. The members of our body, which heretofore have been the weapons of sin, are now henceforth the weapons of righteousness unto God. So we follow Jesus, *witnessing to the kingdom*, and blameless, in love before God. The miracle, then, is the testimony to the truth, or the visible expression of it. So the Son of man hath power on earth to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee. And thus, when we, like Jesus, teach the kingdom of God and his righteousness, whereby men can Arise, and take up their bed and walk, can we say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee."

8. Again does Matthew, as if the Spirit would rebuke the narrow and exclusive theories of religious fanaticism, introduce, as he is wont, some incident to denote the universal character and tendency of the truth. The multitudes glorified God, who had given such power unto men. But they cannot glorify him but in the way Jesus teaches: Let your light so shine before men that they, beholding your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven.

9. With many, Matthew is an example of an "elective effectual calling." However, he has most carefully throughout cut at the root of any such doctrine. He well knew how his own nation, elect, had, in their conceit, not only perverted the oracles of God, but, in their bigoted prejudices, rejected the Messiah. However, Matthew is a distinguished instance in whom was exemplified the truth that the Son of man hath power to forgive sins—that is, to impart the divine life. It cannot be said, "that the call of Matthew exhibits the power of Christ over mind, while, in stilling the tempest, it was over matter." Matthew, in following Christ, represents one obeying the law of *his own inner condition*. His outward and immediate following signified this.

He gathers up in himself what the preceding miracles of healing already teach. He does not put himself forward as a distinguished believer; but, in himself, he magnifies the grace of God. The disciples had not as yet learned Christ in truth. They were continually reproved because of their unbelief. In the outward call of the four fishermen, Matthew teaches the essential principles of an indwelling faith. And now he introduces himself, not only as a witness to the full and free grace of God, but *as the most unworthy recipient* on whom it was bestowed, and by whom it was realised.

The Jewish nation possessed the land as typical of God their portion, their inheritance. They were placed in it as redeemed from Egypt, so from all evil. To subject the land to any earthly power was not only slavery, but a subjecting of God to the creature, which was essentially sin. Being, then, oppressed by a foreign yoke, it taught them that the nation had dishonoured their God. And Matthew, at the receipt of custom, not only testified to this dishonour, but gloried in his shame.

In the general degradation, the publicans were lost to all shame.

Their very calling testified that they had separated themselves from the God of their fathers, and identified themselves with his enemies. They were held in abhorrence by their countrymen, and justly so, for they were traitors, not only to their country, but to their God. They were the prodigals who went into a far country, having parted with all their living, and because of the famine which there prevailed, they joined themselves to a citizen of that country, who further degraded them, that, in the figurative words of Scripture, he sent them to feed swine. Such were publicans. The other Evangelists call him by his Hebrew name. But he, as a publican, sitting at the receipt of custom, would thereby indicate that he was cut off from the inheritance of his fathers in a condition more degraded than that of Paul, the persecutor, murderer, blasphemer, who called himself the chief of sinners; yet, as Matthew—his Christian name—he would testify to the grace of God, and how truly it was within the power of all to obey. And he glorified God.

Each man knows himself far better than he knows his neighbour, or his neighbour can know him. Matthew hesitated not so to describe himself, that he might appear the most degraded to his countrymen, and show how all is of grace, by which every one is free to arise and follow Christ.

It is of little matter whether Matthew, at that time, entered into the full and clear apprehension of that which we are apprehended of in Christ Jesus. His object is, that the truth of God may be clearly apprehended, and our obligations in respect of it.

The call is simply, Follow me. And he arose and followed him. This call of Christ is to all for whom he died. This call by his Word is in the revelation of what is. It is not a mere word, but the eternal verities themselves that call; yea, constrain men to follow. And so all nature bears her witness, as she is ever exhibiting the principles of the kingdom, *in the shadows* of the invisible. (Rom. i. 20.) So, then, by the Word, as the revelation of what is, and by the parabolic teaching of nature, all men are called.

What it is to follow Christ has been sufficiently taught, as we may find in the preceding chapter; for if we apprehend Christ, we have, as an inseparable correlative, *the blessing of adoption*, as taught in the miracle immediately preceding this call of Matthew.

The call to follow implies that, whatever may have been our

past, or our knowledge of religious truth, *we put on Christ, and seek the blessing of adoption, and yield our bodies a living sacrifice unto God.*

The calling of God does not necessarily require us to give up our avocation, unless it in anywise militate against our spiritual well-being. Still, in whatever circumstances, we must be free, sitting loose to all. The Baptist admonished the publicans to take no more than their due. Why he did not, as a Jew, denounce the calling of these men, was because the ceremonial had ceased, the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile was broken down. However, there is no occupation in this life but respecting which it may be truly said, Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. Having brought out the truth, and applied it to himself, Matthew yet dwells upon the degraded condition of the publican, and the abounding grace of God, that he might say, in the words of Paul: Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering for a pattern to them which should henceforth believe on him into everlasting life.

10, 11. The form is peculiar which introduces to the following narrative. It does not state that Matthew invited the several publicans, or that the Lord called them. It came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. This may appear simple and clear enough; but how does it explain Matthew following Jesus?

Matthew had sat down with Jesus, and so partaken of the heavenly feast; and where should we find the expression of this but in the activities of a holy love? It seeks to bring others likewise to possess of its fulness. The mentioning of Jesus sitting at meat *in the house* is significant. 'Jesus entering the ship constitutes us a holy vessel unto God. Even so now sitting *in the house*. Further, the love of God, which flows from oneness with him, compels others to come, who, like Matthew, are partakers of the same blessing. Zacchæus receiving Jesus into his house was then, *that day*, a son of the true Abraham. Even as the Lord teaches, Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come unto him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

The scribes, as interpreters of the law, had objected to Jesus pronouncing the forgiveness of sins. They understood not that he was not exercising any arbitrary act, but declaring a fact that he who entered into the full purpose of God was a son of God, and, therefore, his sins were forgiven. Now, the Pharisees, considering themselves the true children of the covenant, ask, "If your Master is what he claims to be, why does he eat with publicans and sinners? Why does he identify himself with these men, who, by the law of God and the laws of man, are reprobated?" They would further say, Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. They may quote Scripture, but they understand it not. They err, and are strangers to the mighty hand of God. They cannot draw the line where he does.

The scribes and Pharisees may have had what are called conscientious scruples. They, doubtless, saw not only that their religion was coming to nought, but it behoved them to consider wherein it failed. They took their law as a code of life and morals, which it obviously appeared to be, rather than as a revelation of a spiritual world, and man's relation to it; how that there were two great powers in antagonism, and that every man was identified with the one or the other. They saw not that the ceremonial law was only outward and shadowy, yet attested the reality, and, instead of embracing this, they conformed their carnal minds—they disciplined the old Adam to that. So identified with it were they, that Paul calls it the enmity in the law of ordinances, which Jesus blotted out, nailing it to his cross. They had so perverted it, that he describes it as being against us. When Jesus heard what they had asked, he said unto them, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." There is, doubtless, a close connexion between mind and mind, and these words, from the large heart and clear mind of the Redeemer, weighted with truth, must have come with great force, urging them to consider to which category they belonged. They must have felt their confidence shaken, for grave doubts would arise. But, had they been true to themselves, what words could be more gracious? When doubts arise, and the words of grace are powerful, men would be whole, altogether Christians, but their prejudices, or the subtle voice of sin, beguiles them. However,

the Lord Jesus, who knew their thoughts, bids them and all men go to the Scriptures, and understand them—learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.

13. They are sent to the oracles of God to learn the truth—the Gospel, in the Old Testament. The property of mercy is not to condemn, but *to deliver the oppressed*. And the soul of man is not delivered until it receives, in all its fulness, that for which it was created. Mercy is a distinctive feature in the true Physician. It has no respect of persons. It is a libel on the mercy of God, even as it is on his love, to say that he loves one more than another. Christ died for all—publicans and sinners, as for scribes and Pharisees, that all *might be blessed*. The name *physician*, implies a responsibility which is never shirked, but cheerfully undertaken and discharged, regardless of personal inconvenience, that the sufferer may be relieved. The earthly physician, at the best, is but a shadow of the heavenly.

All men are sinners, all need the mercy of God, and there is but one way in which it flows. It is no mercy that comes in any other way. Thus, the good Physician sent them to the Word of God—the Old Testament, that from it they might learn the unvarying principles of the kingdom of God and his righteousness, even as Matthew has set them forth from the lips of Christ.

The Jews did not understand how the law was holy, righteous, and good. They regarded sacrifice as “Corban”—something given to God to propitiate him. “Go, then, to that portion of Scripture, the title of which I give you, and learn what mercy means.” They had perverted the Scriptures—they regarded them as a theory of religion, as preceptive commandments, and not as a revelation. And like the Moabite they would say, Wherewith shall I come before the Lord; shall I come with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old—in the outward ordinances of religion? or, with thousands of rams or ten thousand rivers of oil: so lay all my property at his feet? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression—the *fruit of my body* for the sin of my soul? The answer is simple, Do judgment, love mercy, walk humbly with thy God. The first is, carry the cross in the judgment of all that is not of the Father. The second is, the freedom consequent on the condemnation of sin. It is mercy which is followed by righteousness in the Holy Ghost. Having, then, asked and received,

sought and found, mercy and righteousness are further expressed by *walking humbly with thy God*. We cannot love mercy if we desire not a deliverance from sin. But if we do, and experience deliverance, then we desire it also for our fellow-man, that he, as we, may be filled with all the fulness of God.

All the sacrificial offerings attest the proclamation Jehovah made of himself:—Jehovah, Jehovah Elohim, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. Again, *I desired mercy* and not sacrifice, the *knowledge of God* more than burnt offerings. Wherefore the Son of God came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance; from the power of Satan unto God; that their minds, being transformed, may prove the good, perfect, acceptable will of God. How shall this be except they possess the mind which was in Christ Jesus? and how shall they have this but by his indwelling? Then, what is this mind in Christ Jesus, but a death to all, wherefore he is highly exalted, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father. If, then, they had rightly used the ordinances of God, they would have discovered in all the Mosaic institutions a continual testimony to the mercies of God. It is no mercy to forgive sins, and leave man under the power of sin. The mercy of God has broken every yoke, that man may partake of a full redemption wrought by the Almighty arm, and a holy provision that meets the soul's necessities. God wants nothing of man; he wants mercy, his own gift. He wants no fleshly discipline or carnal offering. All the offerings of the old Adam are vain, they are not the fruit—the outcoming of a good tree. In the advent of Christ he taketh away the vain oblations, and establisheth his own will, that which he had purposed in himself before all time, that man should have the place of sons. Wherefore he hath gathered all into Christ that the blessing of adoption should descend upon all, that all might work the will of God.

We may here remark, that so far from the Pharisees' teaching containing elements of a more spiritual religion than the original Mosaic system (*Essays and Reviews*, p. 10), they are sent to the Mosaic to learn a more spiritual religion than they ever knew much less practised.

Astounded by the power of the Lord's teaching, and the spiritual application of a passage from the Scriptures, the Pharisees draw back, and in their desperation put forward some of John's disciples. He was accounted a prophet, and had denounced them as a generation of vipers that could not escape the wrath to come.

14. The truth of God is fully revealed, and it, gathered up in Matthew, shows wherein we follow Jesus. But sin is in antagonism to the covenant, and has its followers. The scribes and Pharisees, as the highest forms of religious types, stand upon the Scriptures, the former in the doctrine of the One God, yet strangers to the Paternity in which he has revealed himself; the latter, as examples of life, without the covenant. But now we approach the very important and instructive incident, the coming of John's disciples. They indeed claim to have put off the world, the flesh, and sin, else they could not be John's disciples. They refer to their fasting as a witness. They might say, We have all that is taught concerning asking and receiving, being just in the position of those in Acts xix. 2—5, who had learned Christ, but failing to go on to perfection, lapsed into outward things, and who, when instructed how they should believe *into* Christ *Jesus*, were baptized into the name of Jesus—that is, into the Holy Ghost, signified by the imposition of hands, even as their baptism signified a burial into the death of Christ.

The truth then finds opponents in the followers of the Baptist, who, so to speak, is the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And these are a type of all who fail in the truth according to the order of God, and in its completeness. Many ask for the Spirit, not having Christ crucified, and degenerate into a repulsive self-complacency. On the other hand, they who take the cross and rest upon it in a rigid asceticism, or mortification, are strangers to the peace and joy of the Gospel in the Holy Ghost.

Jesus, with his disciples, feasting with the publicans and sinners, afforded his adversaries the most opportune and fitting moment for putting forth, as they conceived, the most telling and irresistible argument against him. His feasting *outwardly* expressed the fulness of the divine nature bestowed, and of which they were partakers, *who had learned Christ*. He now takes the Pharisees and the disciples of John on their own ground. Their

fasting was nothing. It was only an outward thing. Jesus asks, Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn as long as the bridegroom *is with them*? Did they understand him? While resting in what was outward, they were answered also by the like, that they might apprehend the reality. Two ideas are conveyed by the words of the Lord Jesus. It is not for any to cavil and say, How can the children be the married wife? Children are the correlative of parent, and so attest the Father, and marriage attests the spiritual union, for, being dead by the body of Christ, we are married to another, even him who rose from the dead, that we may bring forth fruit unto God. And this is the truth conveyed, not only by the character, but also the imagery of the bridegroom in the bridal-chamber, and the children of the bride-chamber rejoicing in his presence. Thus the outward presence of Jesus with these was a sign of the bridal union, of the bridegroom rejoicing over his bride. Shall, then, the children of the bride-chamber, which, by metonymy, are put for the bride herself, mourn? How can she, when the bridegroom is with her?

Taking, then, the outward as expressing the spiritual truth: since the bridegroom is come, and is with the bride, should there be fasting—should there not rather be feasting? When the prodigal returns to the embrace of the everlasting Father—that is, in adoption—in Christ, and the Spirit of the Son, is it not a time to kill the fatted calf, and to be merry?—for there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.

But the time will come when the bridegroom *shall be taken from them*, and then shall they fast. The Lord would here, as he ever does, lead them from that which was outward and visible to that which was spiritual and invisible. The days will come when he shall be put to death—be crucified; then will his disciples fast. They, who are his disciples, will testify to his death as their death, and say, “Though we have known Christ *after the flesh*, henceforth know we him no more.” They will show that, as Christ crucified was not of this world, so are they not of this world; and this will be their meetness for oneness with the Son of God.

What the true fasting is, and what the true feasting or rejoicing with the bridegroom is, Jesus further teaches in the two following parables—the rent garment and the bottles of wine—suggested by the fasting and feasting respectively.

16. These men would be physicians of the spiritual sick, and they propose a doing of something with the old garment in order to make it better. Now, God has given statutes and commandments sufficient, as expressive of the inner life. But, failing this life, men increase them, and impose them upon the old Adam—the old garment of the flesh. Many, therefore, cannot be the outflow of the divine life, but are additions, according to the carnal mind, as if God was to be propitiated by any such sacrifices, and the worshipper restored to favour in all his uncleanness.

The words of the Lord Jesus are very expressive. Moses distinctly told their fathers, when about to enter the land of promise, that for forty years their clothes waxed not old, thereby teaching them that, in the presence of God as a redeeming God, this signified that sin and corruption were cast out. But now they were conscious that their garments did wax old. Aye; they must know it in the flesh; for the law of sin and death is the law of the old Adam. Wherefore the Prophet says, Rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God. They would take the old garment expressive of the presence of evil, and they would rend it as indicating their sorrow; but it is all outward in the flesh. It is not that sorrow that needeth no repentance, and which is according to God. Then their patching it in order to make it a marriage garment, to enter into the joy of the marriage feast, will only make the rent worse; for that which filleth in taketh from the old. The Word of God, instead of being a revelation of him, and of the way of access to him—yea, of his covenant—in all his Paternal character to all men, is perverted according to the practices and prejudices of men. And so, with all their moral standing and multiplied religious observances, the *rent will be made worse*; for many shall come from the east and from the west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of the heavens, *and the children of the kingdom shall be cast out*. They only will be permitted to partake of that great marriage feast of a Triune God, in all the fulness of the covenant, who now have the true fasting and the true feasting.

We need not travel far to see in our own country this baneful condition. Men may be conscious of sin, that the garment waxes old: they may feel sorry for it; but instead of putting off the old man, and putting on the new man, after God, they patch the old

garment in multiplied ceremonies and observances, which, however approved by their fellows, are an abomination before God.

17. Passing on from the true fasting—which is a putting off of the old garment altogether in Christ, that we may put on the robe of righteousness, and be meet for the marriage supper of the Lamb—we now come to the feasting. When Jehovah was about to reveal himself in redemption, Moses came before Pharaoh, who, as a vessel of dishonour, represented Satan, and said, “Let my people go, that they may hold *a feast* unto me in the wilderness.” They must be redeemed out of Egypt, partake of the lamb, pass through the Red Sea, in order to hold the feast, and, holding it *in the wilderness*, would attest their redemption—a condition necessary in order to sit down with Jehovah, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob.

Wine is the principal ingredient of the feast. Christ is the true vine, and we are the branches. If we realise our union in the vine, we have the living sap, which empties itself into fruit. Wine is called the fruit of the vine (Luke xxii. 18), having especial reference to the life, for it represents the blood of Jesus. In the blood is the life; wherefore it is put for the life itself—even the divine life, as in the parable before us. Concerning this gift of God, of which Christ partakes in all its fulness, and without measure, the Prophet writes, In this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. (Is. xxv. 6.)

The wine is new. Since this dispensation is that of the Spirit, it is called new in contradistinction from the old. Christ, as we have already shown, belonged to the old. He was the end, the fulfilment, the accomplishment of the typical or shadowy, which was to be abolished. The veil is even now upon men in reading the Old Testament, which veil is done away only in Christ. The *new* wine, then, takes this description from the ministration of the Spirit *consequent* upon the advent and work of Christ.

The new bottles are a clean heart—sin cast out. The preceding parable enforces the necessity of Christ. If any man be in Christ, he is a *new* creation: old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (2 Cor. v. 17.) God forbid, says the Apostle, that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord

Jesus Christ, by whom I am crucified to the world, and the world to me; for in Christ Jesus (here he advisedly changes the order of the names) neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything, but a new creation. (Gal. vi. 14, 15.) He gloried in the cross, and he possessed the blessing.

The old bottles are simply the old Adam—the old garment. There Christ is not. *If the Spirit be ministered into these old bottles, the bottles break, and the wine runneth out.* How shall the holy God dwell in an unclean temple? Would that teachers followed the Lord's teaching, and not impose their own theories. The bottles must first be new to receive the new wine, else all is lost, bottles and wine. So the Spirit departs. The erroneous teaching of seeking the Spirit, without first having Christ crucified in the heart, is the rebound of patching the old garment, and occasions not only a terrible uncertainty, which, from the nature of things must be, but also strifes and contentions, which are so patent to all but the chief actors themselves. Ignorant minds may be persuaded to rest even their salvation upon the *ipse dixit* of stronger minds; but thoughtful men will know the *rationale* of the truth; and the Gospel, being not contrary to reason, affords the most legitimate sphere for its exercise.

The prayer of David, when he had been guilty of presumptuous sins, was, Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, and renew within me a righteous Spirit. טָהוֹר is to clean from all defilement and pollution. How he is to be cleansed he signifies, saying, Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. The hyssop is the bitter herb—the permanent accompaniment of the paschal feast. The lamb must not be eaten without it. Again, the blood, in which is the life, is sprinkled *with a bunch of hyssop*. The bitter herb refers to the crucifixion—conformity to the death of Christ, as the way to realise the blood, or the life imparted by the sprinkling. Not only purge, but also wash me: thus the cleansing is intensified as the true condition for the Spirit being renewed within.

Jeremiah expresses the condition from which we are to be cleansed. I have, saith Jehovah, seen thine adulteries, and thy neighings, the lewdness of thy whoredoms, and thine abominations on the hills, in the fields. Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem; wilt

thou not be made clean? Yet Ezekiel writes, Jehovah Elohim saith, I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you; a *new* heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you. Such are the new bottles and the new wine. This prediction has its fulfilment in the Gospel. This teaching of the Lord is remarkably confirmed in the miracles following. So he answered the questions, Why does your Master eat with publicans and sinners? Why does he and his disciples not fast like others?

18. Nothing is more calculated to mislead than a blending into one of the several statements of any one subject of the Gospel, instead of bringing prominently forward first what each Evangelist has to say, as sufficient for the truth he desires to convey.

Matthew is charged by some with want of clearness and precision, because he has, in the following miracles, omitted many of the circumstantial details. Whereas, the glorious theme itself constrained the inspired writers to take only so much of what relates to time and history as would best convey the eternal verities which were the true subjects of their writings.

They may or may not omit particular incidents and details, so that the spiritual truth may come out clearly and distinctly. For instance, Matthew states that the woman was diseased twelve years, and omits to state that the little daughter raised from the dead was twelve years old—doubtless, because he is most desirous of showing how all come short of the glory of God, and so attests the universal depravity; and that the obligation is upon every one to put forth the earnest, irresistible endeavour to obtain, with a right appreciation, the healing of Christ, preparatory to the life.

Matthew speaks of “a ruler” coming in behalf of his daughter. He well knew how his countrymen regarded outward things, even religious observances of their own creation; magnified them—rested in them. And in this ruler he would introduce one who was not unmindful of outward things, even the ordinances of God—a *ruler and a father*—witnessing to corresponding spiritual truths, to him who came as the Christ, and as the Son revealing the Father. These relationships of life being powers, are greater and truer witnesses to God than all the religious rites and cere-

monies of man's creation, as implied in the last words of the Old Testament. Matthew, as a Jew rejoicing in the covenant, would gladly seize any incident that more distinctly referred to it.

One now comes to Jesus; he is a ruler and a father, and confirms all that is gone before, saying, My daughter is now dead; come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. If we could transfer all that he did to the two women—the one with the issue, and the daughter of the ruler, as if done to the *ruler himself*, and his conduct in connexion therewith, as he came to Christ the Son of God revealing the Father, we should see in the whole what is taking place with respect to any man who lays hold of the blessings of the covenant.

19. No man seeks the Son of God in vain: who, as the Sun of righteousness, ever goes forth with healing in his wings. Not only does the man, but also the two women, who are called "Daughter," bear testimony to the Father. The Lord would say to them who professed to know God, You ask why I eat with publicans and sinners, and do not fast like the Pharisees and the disciples of John? I answer, It is because I testify to the Father, who hath given abundantly to all. And in this father seeking life for his child, there is a simple testimony to the truth, as there is to all that goes before.

20. In the attainment of true life we must not ignore God's order. The introduction of the one miracle in the other conveys most distinctly not only the inseparable connexion in the spiritual healing, as in one individual, but marks most expressly the relative order, how that the one must precede the other.

We live in an artificial state; we do not call things by their right names. However "repulsive" be the imagery employed by God, man's condition, by reason of sin, is more filthy—more abominable—than that which for a time destroys the marriage union. Sin in the body, death in the soul to God—the inheritance of all from the old Adam, stand in the way of man's oneness with God. The former must be cast out before the other can be realised.

The woman with an issue of blood *twelve* years, represents the condition of the Jewish nation, and *so of the world*. Her condition dishonours the paternity, and is a fit and expressive emblem of sin. All flesh is filthy and unclean. However, the Father

will have mercy, and has sent the good Physician, with the only remedy to meet this condition of mankind. Until the remedy is applied she is not fit for the bridal-chamber—to sit down at the feast, though the bridegroom is waiting. The necessity of this healing may now be understood, how that, if we would come to the Son for life, we must first inwardly know him as the Christ healing us from all our filthiness, and delivering us from the garment spotted with the flesh. Her disease for twelve years was the plague of Israel. All are in this condition, and all will be healed, not by fasting, but by coming to Christ, and touching even the hem *of his* garment. She has great faith; she knows full well that it is of no avail to patch the old garment. She has sought other physicians, taken other remedies, but instead of getting better, she has grown worse. Such, indeed, is man now with his refined carnal tastes, his sanctimonious religious professions, and the development of his gigantic mind. Yes, he has patched the old garment, and the rent is worse. Her condition, then, is such that *she has a deep consciousness* that there is but one remedy that will meet it, and it is to touch the garment of Christ. This is the true fasting that breaks every yoke. It is to put away our filthy rags, and put on the wedding garment, even Christ; so shall we be meet for the bridal feast. She has mourned in truth over her condition, as one of uncleanness, of separation, of shame. She puts off the old garment by oneness with Christ, that she may be united to God.

This simple but very important truth, appears to be lost sight of. Here is a notable instance of the great error that arises in the interpretations of Scripture, through expositors failing to trace the inner and connected meaning of them, which is the result of not having a clear and intelligent understanding of the covenant. Instead of there being “a weakness and error in this woman’s view,” she stands out in contrast with all, having in the precise apprehension of the truth a faith not second to that of the centurion. Her faith was strong. She was in nowise deterred by her protracted suffering. Did she regard Jesus as the Son of God? That he knew her thoughts—the very condition of her inner life? Then, why has he allowed her to remain so long in this fearful state? She might murmur against the providence of God. But she does not. She comes for a oneness with Christ.

The garment of the Son of God is Christ *crucified*, to touch which in all her uncleanness and separation is to be made whole immediately. Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her he said, Daughter, be of good cheer ; thy faith hath made thee whole. This faith took in all that is represented by the leper, the centurion's servant, and Peter's wife's mother, and their healing. It was no imperfect faith. It was *the one faith* of God.

Jesus now enters the ruler's house. Christ crucified is a reality within, as seen by the healing of the woman, *and now the Son of God enters*. Hired mourners are playing their funeral dirge. They are making a noise ; the Evangelist does not dignify it with the name of mourning. Oftentimes are the demonstrations of mourning and of gladness no better. This hired sorrow lacked the reality—such is fasting. However, this sorrow *must give place*, for how can the children of the bride-chamber mourn while the bridegroom is with them ? The Son of God is come, and says, She is not dead, but sleepeth. Naturally she may be dead, but the Lord is not revealing this which is apparent to all. He attests the invisible truth that where sin is removed by putting on Christ, the soul then sleeps till it realises the divine life. Ignorant of the invisible reality, they who are making much of outward things laugh him to scorn. Rooted prejudices, ignorant self-conceit—men without thought, without consideration, thus treat the simple truth of God. However, he went in, and took her by the hand—no mere touch, but a warm grasp, expressive of the abundant fulness of the blessing. This taking her by the hand indicates how great was the faith *that appropriated Christ* ; and the maid arose. She arose as did the palsied one, as did Matthew. Thus did the Lord pour new wine into new bottles. If, then, we would have everlasting life, which the Father hath given to us in the Son, *we must have hearts prepared for it* : when we seek and find ; and so, like the Jewish maid, we arise to the glory of God.

26. Having shown the condition of man by reason of sin and death, Matthew would, as he is wont, intimate the universal tendency of the Gospel as meeting the necessities of all.

27. He now guards against an error which tends more than anything else to keep men from following Jesus. The simple command is, Follow me. To this end the Lord healed the mul-

titudes, and showed them, in the Sermon on the Mount, the pathway of life, which, with respect to the work of Christ, the Son of God, is more distinctly set forth in the miracles contained in these chapters, and we learn that before we can most truly follow him, we must know how to possess him as the Christ the Son of God, to the glory of the Father.

28. The teaching of this miracle is highly important. It not only implies all that has gone before—how the leper came to Christ, and was united to him, which is guarded from error according to what follows; how the paralytic came to the Son of God, and received the adoption, which also is guarded from error by what follows; when both truths are set forth in the healing of the woman and raising of Jairus' daughter, as if done to one individual; but, also, that we are to follow Jesus. Then are we to wait till God does something? The Lord says, No man can come to me, except the Father which sent me draw him. The Lord here affirms that the Father is drawing every man; that the grace of God has preceded every man; for if he spared not his only Son, but freely gave him *for all*, how will he not with him freely give us all things. Therefore, the Spirit is poured out upon all flesh, and God is drawing every man to his embrace. The kingdom is established, to which nature and providence continually bear their testimony. And it is for every man, each for himself, to make effective what is. God is no respecter of persons; if he were, he would ignore his own Paternity; but with him there is no variableness nor shadow of turning.

These two men are blind—the condition of men in the filthiness of the flesh; they have not yet received the light of the Gospel of the glory of God in Jesus Christ. They would follow Jesus, therefore they come to him as the Son of David, the Lord—that is, as Christ the Son of God. This miracle takes up, then, all that has gone before. The question, “Believe ye that I am able to do this?” implies it. How could the Lord heal these men—heal this condition—but in the way Matthew has already shown? “According to your faith be it done unto you.” Their faith is the healing—the substance—the realisation of what is. Their eyes are opened; they are redeemed from the filth of the flesh, and the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, shines into them. They are delivered from that which obstructs the purpose

for which the eye was created, and they receive the blessing of God in all its fulness. Faith is the possession of redemption, and the divine nature in Christ Jesus made effective by demonstration in life.

30. The Lord now sternly charged them to see that no man knew it. They were to follow the Lord in the possession of those principles which constituted their faith. We must, then, be ever suspicious of the tendency of our depraved nature to make ourselves somewhat when we are nothing. The blindness is put away, and light abounds; man decreases and God increases.

To make effective the principles of the covenant, and so follow Christ Jesus, requires a watchful and prayerful spirit, so that the very moment a man begins to talk of his Christianity, instead of Christianity unobtrusively demonstrating itself, then is he to doubt it most. If we would follow Christ, we cannot be talking even of what he has done for us. The Lord well knew how near that spirit is that loves to look upon its own things, and not upon another's. The words of Paul are, "*By the grace of God, I am what I am.*" He magnified that grace when, in all lowliness of mind, he esteemed others better than himself. He knew his own heart better than he did that of another. If we, then, conscious of our filthiness and blindness, come to Christ, and are made one with him in adoption, we shall, like the woman, be ashamed to talk of our filthiness. We shall feel that we are walking under the eye of God; for we are in the kingdom, and walk by faith, regardless of men, maintaining in adversity and in prosperity the even tenour of our way.

31, 32. Another miracle is now given, that we may not misunderstand the truth. The fame of Jesus is intended to be known throughout the land, but not in the exaltation of any man, for what savours of man is of Satan. Every man in Christ Jesus should savour of the things which be of God. How much so they who preach the kingdom, as they testify to the things of God, according to the oracles of God! The fame of Jesus had spread; but these two men, while speaking of themselves, would but incidentally refer to him. Their failing to do as he commanded them, showed that they were not one with him, but had lapsed into their former condition. After charging them not

to speak, one who is unable to speak is now brought before him. He is dumb, and possessed with a devil. We must not part with one iota of the truth gone before; all is here included. Man is possessed of the devil. He is unable to follow Jesus, and testify to the kingdom and righteousness of God. When the devil was cast out, the dumb spake. His speaking *is the outcoming of righteousness*. So, when the dumb spake, the multitudes marvelled, saying, "It was never so seen in Israel." Christ Jesus prepares his own ministers. Their fitness, their qualification, have been distinctly set before us. These words of the multitude recorded by Matthew, are intended by him to have a spiritual application. (Eph. vi. 19.) The truth, then, as the Lord revealed it and taught it in this last miracle, was never so seen in Israel. And when he comes in the full revelation of the truth, shall he find faith on the earth? We are congratulating ourselves at our "Christian progress," seen in strifes, contentions, jealousies, heartburnings. Worldliness is dragged by the heels into the kingdom of God. All, indeed, that is done in preventing crime, in ameliorating the condition of the poor, in building institutions for every malady and misfortune, and in erecting glorious fanes for the service of God, is only outward, and forms part of a recognised social state. The multitudes may say, "Where are those who thus love Christ, and in this perfect oblivion of self, make manifest that their works are wrought in God?" No material progress, no natural development, no achievement in art or science, nor even philanthropy, with its singular developments; nor Pharasaism regarded as the perfection of holiness—in a separation from man, and not from sin; in a social asceticism, and not in a self-negation, can be put for the true—Christ crucified in the heart. The Lord himself attested the truth. He was Melchizedek in his power, and the testimony of the multitudes was indisputable. But the Pharisees, stung to the quick that one independent of them should be recognised as the greater teacher of Israel, and finding that their knowledge, holiness, and righteousness were despised by him whose parentage they know, allow their prejudices to override their convictions, and stultifying themselves, say, He casts out devils by the prince of the devils. The truth, as it clashes with the prejudices of men, especially those who regard themselves as the impersonation of holiness,

when all that distinguishes them from others may be circumstantial, will ever be thus unmercifully dealt with.

35. Notwithstanding the bitterness of his enemies, the Lord went through all the cities and villages, heralding forth the good news of the kingdom:—That now, as in the burning bush, “God is in the midst of men, and they are not consumed;” that the Son of David, the Lord, as the bridegroom, is come; and that he has done all in order that his bride should be worthy of him. That he has cast out devils, and given to all the wedding garment, that they should be meet for the bridal feast. He says, *All* is now ready: Come. The garment is provided; the feast is ready. These are the good news. Faith cometh by hearing, and that the Word of God—the revelation of eternal verities. As the ear receives the sound because the sound exists, so may the heart receive the eternal truths of the Gospel. Yea, Christ is in every man—as he said to his enemies, the kingdom of God is within you; the Son of God is in every man, for he is the light that lighteth every man coming into the world. Wherefore every man lives in the Gospel, or not—in the last Adam, or in the old. If in the latter, then he builds again that which Christ has destroyed. The healing *of every* sickness, and *of every* disease among the people, were not miracles of power, as sealing his teaching, but outward expressions of the kingdom, how that he, the Saviour of all men, had healed the souls of all.

36. In the yearning compassion of Christ we have an inviolable guarantee for the mercy of God. He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, not because he had a created nature, susceptible of all that affects man, but because he was made sin for us. He is ever ready to help the most degraded and debased. In the heart of Jesus was the law of the Father—a holy love in a longing desire to make known the mercy of God.

The most ignorant in spiritual things—the most wretched outcast—can find in the good Physician not only a power and readiness to heal, but one so compassionate as to be painfully distressed in his behalf.

Jehovah is a Shepherd—all men are sheep; but they are torn, *rent*—*εσκυλμενοι*, and *prostrate*. In this imagery we see what the two daughters represent. It is the condition of all men. Yet the good Shepherd has redeemed them. They belong to no man.

They belong to Christ, and it is the duty of those who have been delivered from evil, and whose tongue has been untied, to bring them into one fold, under one Shepherd. The multitudes were as sheep, torn and prostrate; while those who claimed to be shepherds by their learning, knowledge of the law, and show of holiness, were only hirelings.

There is but one true Shepherd, one true Bishop; and he is a universal one. Peter did not forget the rebuke when he thought otherwise. He had boasted of a love above others, yet he thrice denied his Lord. He knew not the cross. The Lord, after his crucifixion, challenged that love to feed his lambs, to pastor and feed his sheep; but Peter's reply showed that, as yet, he was a stranger to the *αγαπη*—the true love of God. But when he was taught that God had cleansed the world, and his prejudices were rebuked, he awoke from his trance—his *eyes being opened*—and said, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; and he further testified, that in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him. But what shall now be said? Whatever be the interest manifested in religion, or the sense of responsibility deepened in men in the midst of us—for all men feel responsibility in the different relationships of life—may it not be said, Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds, “Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves; should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool: ye kill them that are fed, but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost, but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered because there is no shepherd; and they became meat to all the beasts of the field when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill. Yea; my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth: none did search or seek after them.” Why are they scattered? Why is Christ divided? Because truth is departed. Hence the terrible uncertainty that pervades all classes, particularly the thoughtful and the educated.

38. The principle of the kingdom is, one man soweth, and

another entereth into his labours. This is pre-eminently the fact where the Son of man is the sower. He has in his work sown the seeds of eternal truth. And, *according to them*, must we labour if we would reap. The fields are now ripe for the harvest. They are so by reason of what God has done. The Lord contemplates all from the ground of the covenant. Men are corn to be gathered, but the labourers are few. Hirelings occupy shepherds' posts—idlers, labourers'. The sheep are torn and prostrate, the corn perishes.

Christ is Lord of all. And if among them there be but few labourers, they are to pray the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into his harvest to reap the fruit of his sowing. Who, then, are to pray for labourers? The Lord has distinctly stated, "The sheep are without a shepherd;" and the prayer is not for more, but simply for labourers, as if he and his forerunner were the only ones. Whether we see the invisible things of God by the Word, or be led to them by things that are made, we should thus dispose our hearts, uninfluenced by the prejudices of others, to the simple reception of the truth, and so, being taught of God, we may be qualified to lead others into the way of life. Thus, the Lord of the harvest, and not man, sends forth labourers into the harvest. In this one desire we are one with the Lord; we supplicate according to his mind, and we realise truly that we are in him. And, as we begin, so we continue to develop the Christian life. To be hampered with what is not of Christ, is to reject this solemn injunction: for how can men pray for labourers when they take a ground filled with thorns and briers, of worldly strifes and contentions! The harvest is ready and plenteous. All men, then, are in a position to realise a condition fit for the heavenly garner. Then may the Lord send true shepherds to feed and guide, and true labourers to gather men into his kingdom, seeking and bringing all into the way of life. By thus praying, we realise our interest in the kingdom. We knock, and it is opened to us.

CHAPTER X.

1 **AND** when he had called unto *him* his twelve disciples, he gave them power *against* unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these ; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother ; James *the son* of Zebedee, and
3 John his brother ; Philip, and Bartholomew ; Thomas, and Matthew the publican ; James *the son* of Alphæus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was
4 Thaddæus ; Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into
6 the way of the Gentiles, and into *any* city of the Samaritans enter ye not :
7 but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach,
8 saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils : freely ye have received, freely give.
9 Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for *your*
10 journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves : for the workman
11 is worthy of his meat. And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter,
12 inquire who in it is worthy ; and there abide till ye go thence. And when
13 ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it : but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.
14 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart
15 out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.

16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves : be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men : for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues ; and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake,
19 for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak : for it shall be given
20 you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child : and the children shall rise up against *their* parents, and cause them to be put to
22 death. And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake : but he that
23 endureth to the end shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this

city, flee ye into another : for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone
24 over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come. The disciple is not
25 above *his* master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the
disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have
called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more *shall they call*
them of his household !

26 Fear them not therefore : for there is nothing covered, that shall not
27 be revealed ; and hid, that shall not be known. What I tell you in dark-
ness, *that* speak ye in light : and what ye hear in the ear, *that* preach ye
28 upon the housetops. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not
able to kill the soul : but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul
29 and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing ? and one of
30 them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs
31 of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more
32 value than many sparrows. Whosoever therefore shall confess me before
33 men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But
whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father
which is in heaven.

34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth : I came not to send
35 peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his
father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law
36 against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes *shall be* they of his own
37 household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy
of me : and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of
38 me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not
39 worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it : and he that loseth
his life for my sake shall find it.

40 He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth
41 him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet
shall receive a prophet's reward ; and he that receiveth a righteous man in
42 the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And
whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold
water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no
wise lose his reward.

How simple ! how gracious ! the truth here enunciated. And when he had called his twelve disciples, he gave them power. He sends them forth as labourers into his harvest, as shepherds to seek the lost, as physicians to heal all manner of sickness and disease. The truth of God gives men power to meet every necessity, but it is the bridegroom only who has the bride. They therefore espouse man to one husband, as a chaste virgin to Christ.

They are called disciples, implying thereby that they possess the spiritual truths already distinctly and clearly revealed; that they have asked and received, sought and found, knocked and it has been opened to them. So they follow the Lord. However, they are as yet only *outwardly* disciples. The one distinctive characteristic of a disciple is, that he bears the cross; that while fulfilling the relative duties of life *he is not* of this world, even as his Master is not. Outwardly, they were this: their name implies it. Inwardly, they were yet strangers to the cross. They knew Jesus only outwardly—that is, after the flesh. They knew him not as crucified with him. They could not glory in the cross.

They understood not that his visible presence with them signified his invisible presence with *all men* throughout all time, and especially with believers. As twelve, they, as the tribes and sons of Jacob, represented all flesh in relation to the truth. Three is the Trinity, in covenant relation. Four is the sign of all flesh. The covenant is made with all flesh— $3 + 4 = 7$. Thus, seven is the covenant number. And $3 \times 4 = 12$, is the covenant made effective. This is the will of the Father. Twelve, then, signifies the truth, that every disease and every sickness are healed. As disciples, and so according to truth, they have power to cast out and to heal; and as twelve, according to what it signifies, to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease, having *first* cast out unclean spirits.

The Lord's presence with the twelve intimated how, by his indwelling Spirit, he binds together in one body the invisible members constituting that body; for, as disciples, they would be in his name. Yet, in the sealing of the covenant, all are healed. He is the sealing of the covenant. The covenant originated with an oath, when God swore by himself. It is accomplished in Christ Jesus, whom God the Father hath sealed. The covenant, therefore, stands, and cannot be broken. These outward signs, then, not only attest the kingdom, and the blessing upon all men, but also the individual realisation of them, in all their marvellous simplicity and integrity. To the cripple of Lystra, who was impotent in his feet from his mother's womb—a true image of man—and who, having heard the Word and obeyed its revelation, Paul, looking steadfastly at him, and seeing that he had *faith* of being saved, in a loud voice, said, "Stand upright upon thy feet."

And he who was thus purged from sin, and filled with the Spirit, sees and enters the kingdom, walking and praising God. This power—not the mere working of miracles, but the restoring of a soul to God: bringing it out of darkness into light, from the power of Satan unto God—the Lord gave to his disciples, even to all who go forth *in his name*. Then let such magnify their office, that, being true labourers, true shepherds, yea, true physicians, no condition may be hopeless, no form of disease may baffle their skill.

2. The names of the *twelve* apostles, &c. This number is repeated. Being disciples, they are now sent forth in Christ's stead, endued with the Holy Ghost, ambassadors for God. An apostle has seen the Lord, been taught of him, and is sent by him. And the manifest signs of one such were, that, in all patience (*ὑπομηνή*) he endured: being crucified with Christ, he remained under the cross with words, signs, and mighty deeds. The visible signs of discipleship were, not providing themselves with gold or silver, or bags, or scrip. Yet, in the fulness of grace, "*freely ye have received, freely give.*" Peter, on the day of Pentecost, gave testimony when, at the beautiful gate, he said, to the man impotent from the womb, Silver and gold have I none, but such as *I have* give I unto thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.

In the arrangement of the names, there is not only order, but a mystical signification. The writers of the covenant—which was the truth, the reality, that which gave meaning to nature and providence—could take all created things, natural laws and fixed customs, because adapted to man's necessity, to illustrate it, for they wrote for man, who lives in the midst of what is material and visible, as well as what is spiritual and invisible.

The catalogue of names is divided into three fours, in order to indicate the covenant which the Trinity have graciously condescended to make with all flesh. In the twelve apostles, as in the tribes of Israel, and in the twelve sons of Jacob, the most prominent characteristics of the human family may be found: so representing all flesh. Matthew, moreover, brings out the great relations in the covenant, as he describes fathers, sons, and brothers—the two pairs of brothers in the Galilean fishermen; then Philip, who desired to know the Father; Nathaniel, the son of Talmai; Thomas, whose name is derived from a word signify-

ing double, and so a twin; James, the son of Alphæus; Lebbæus, who would doubtless be described as Jude, the brother of James, but for some excellent and distinguishing quality, as *heartily grasping the truth and holding it fast*—so expressive of his faith. Yet he does not hesitate to distinguish any who possess a description of that which violates or ignores those relations. He mentions Simon, called Peter, as if he would keep in mind the swearer and denier. He speaks of himself as Matthew the publican. He does not call himself Levi, for, as a publican, he has denied the God of his fathers. He does not call himself as Matthew a Christian, but by the opprobrious term “publican” (ch. xviii. 17). The Canaanite, the fierce zealot, is mentioned; and lastly, Judas the betrayer. In taking these four, like the four women in the genealogy of Jesus, in connexion with those relations which centre, or are included in the paternity, we again see the covenant made with all flesh.

It would be consistent to say, that in the patriarchal dispensation the twelve sons of Israel testified to the Father, in whom all the families of the earth are blessed; in the Mosaic, the twelve tribes, to the angel of the covenant, in the establishing of the kingdom, for they were to take the twelve foundation stones from the bottom of Jordan, which they did when it was dried up—signifying the true redemption in the destruction of the last enemy, when death shall be swallowed up. In the Gospel, the apostles would testify to the outpoured Spirit blessing all mankind. Thus, the Jewish nation, in the twelve sons, the twelve tribes, and the twelve apostles, presents a striking allegory of the covenant made with all flesh.

How are we to understand Paul's relation to the twelve? After the day of Pentecost we hear but little of the twelve; while Paul is expressly charged to go to the Gentiles, and unfurl the banner of the cross in the cities of the world. *He would testify to the fulfilment* of that which the twelve outwardly represented.

Failing to see the purpose of God in the appointing of twelve disciples, men talk of a Ham, a Reuben, a Simeon, or a Judas, being in the Church of God. Ham was one of *four* men who were saved in the tripartite ark, so presenting an outward form of the truth attested by the words of Jehovah, even while his wrath was poured out upon all flesh. My covenant is with all flesh.

God does not forget himself in all his judgments; he attests the eternal principles of his kingdom, that we may know him.

It is said, "the early Church" had her faults, disorders, violent quarrels, licentious recklessness of opinion in regard both to faith and practice. (*Essays and Reviews*, 30.) Such statements are inconsistent with a correct idea of what constitutes the Church. It is written, whatsoever is born of God cannot sin. The Church is holy, and without spot. She, then, has not her faults, violent quarrels, or licentious recklessness of opinion—all of which are of the flesh, and not of God.

The Church is not a visible church. There is now no visible church. There was one, but at the death of Christ it ceased to be. The veil was rent. The substance—the invisible now, only, exists. The shadow has passed away. All that distinguished the outward Jewish Church is now merged in the world, for the middle wall of partition is broken down. But the world is redeemed. As it was said to the Jews, Because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; so now the command is to all, Repent, for the kingdom is at hand.

This repentance is not merely the beginning of a turning to God, but its fulfilment. It is that change of mind which in all things proves, manifests the will of God—a repentance not to be repented of. Men are to repent because they are come, not to a mount that can be touched—a visible, tangible church—but to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; and that this is not merely future is evident, not only from the assertion of the writer, that ye are come, but also because he refers to the general assembly of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven, which is the church militant on earth.

Since there is but one church, it is invisible. The foundation is Jesus Christ, who, as Christ, is the chief corner-stone, in whom we are builded a holy temple in the Lord, a habitation for God by the Spirit. The Church has been a continuous body from the beginning of the world. Without it, history would dwarf into a miserable and contracted sphere of nonentities. It is the

Church that gives meaning to time ; and it will last when all things else shall crumble and pass away. In Christ Jesus, who appeared for all men, the Father beholds the whole human family ; wherefore, it is our bounden duty to realise our standing in him—to enter within the veil, into the inner sanctuary—to appropriate the great realities of his everlasting kingdom, else we cut ourselves off from the mercies of God. While it is not in the power of man to regenerate himself, yet it is his fearful prerogative to reject the waters of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

The Church, nevertheless, has its visible signs, which are a threefold order of ministers, and the two sacraments, which have been from the time of the apostles. In the Jewish Church the order of high priest, priests, and Levites, with circumcision, and the feasts, continued to the death of Christ. The invisible Church then *expressed herself* in her sacraments and orders.

All nations are to be baptized. All are to drink of the cup. Not that the doing of these shall cause something, but testify to what has already been done in our being dead and buried with Christ, and made partakers of a new and better life—a communion with God. Such is the mutual relation of the two sacraments. There are other and subordinate relations, showing how truly the purpose of God is one throughout all time ;—baptism, in its relation to circumcision, is the sign of the Gospel dispensation. Its formula implies, what the legal dispensation sets forth, a death to sin, in order to be baptized *into* the covenant Three. In itself these principles are clear enough—the act is the sign of a death to sin, while the formula is of life to God. But in its relation to the other sacrament, it is simply the sign of a death to sin, a burial into the death of Christ, a making of that death effective ; while the eucharist prominently attests the blessing of life.

The invisible Church has expressed herself also in her orders. First, deacons, then priests, then bishops. Thus, since the High Priest is come, and entered with his own blood into the holiest of all, there has been only the invisible church. Had the Jew rightly understood his relation to the invisible, he must have learned how all was leading him into Christ, for the visible, in all its details, attested the invisible, and pointed to it. A standing ministry, in its threefold orders, is a continual witness to the

Triune Jehovah, and so, as the dispersion of the Levites among all the tribes of Israel, teaches that a covenant God is in the midst of men.

The Church of Rome, with her seven sacraments, is truly characteristic of a visible church—one that can be touched. It is *a perfect shadow* of the real, but it wants the reality. It is a shell without the kernel. Seven is truly the number of the covenant, but it has only *two* principles, realities within, whereby we belong to it. They constitute us true members of Christ the Son of God. Without them we have no faith, no Christ, no Son of God—the one foundation of all our hopes. Possessing them, the sacraments *are the expression* of them respectively.

The stream of everlasting life has flowed on. The Church has developed herself independently of all that is visible. And in expressing herself in sacraments and orders, she reveals eternal truths, which constitute the true and only condition of belonging to her. These sacraments and orders do not constitute the Church. They may exist, and the Church be not there. It is a fallacy to say, We do not unchurch the Church of Rome because she holds the doctrine of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the descent of the Holy Ghost, and other fundamental truths of the Christian faith. The Church of Rome, the Church of England, and every other Church is unchurched, wherever is wanting the Son of David. Where Christ is in the heart of any man, *and he lives Christ*, so that it is not he who lives, but Christ, and the life he lives is in the faith of the Son of God, there is Mount Zion, the city of the living God. No rites, forms, ceremonies, or sacraments confer this; for these are, at the best, but the outward expression—the sign and seal of what already exists.

Taking orders is said to be “entering the Church.” If any one takes upon him this awful responsibility without first entering the door—the strait gate, how can he be separated unto the holy work of the ministry? Orders are no door into the Church of God. It is not sufficient to have been baptized, and to have communicated, as preparatory; we must possess the realities to which the sacraments testify; nor is the solemn responsibility of admitting men, by the imposition of hands, discharged because they show a knowledge of mathematics, Greek, or Latin, or even

of theological opinions and controversies, for none of these is the door into the fold of God.

Deacons—the first order—were selected, not from them that were without, *but from living members of the invisible Church*. These bore witness (*μαρτυρουμενοι*), being full of the Holy Ghost, and of wisdom, *σοφια*—the true wisdom—the mind and will of God. Priests were the next order (Acts xi. 30), which was one rather of office than of age. Yet the latter would be true, since they would be chosen because they were not novices, but of older and graver minds. Bishops were the third order, and we find James, the brother of the Lord, occupying this office as the first bishop of the mother city, the metropolis of the Christian world. He is not James the son of Alphæus, nor James the less, but a brother of Christ, and a son of Mary. The brethren of the Lord are distinguished from the disciples or apostles; they did not believe into him. (John vii. 5.) They are noticed separately in Acts i. 14. James, in his epistle, does not style himself apostle, which he would have done had he been one. He was entitled to the term *αποστολος*—apostle of the Church—which the Lord's apostles, doubtless, gave to them who held the office of bishop. Paul distinguished him from the apostles proper as he says, *After that, I was seen of James; then of all the apostles*. (1 Cor. xv. 7.) If James was an apostle, why is he separately mentioned? He is said to have held the most prominent and distinguished position at Jerusalem, even before Peter, the first of the apostles, and the minister to the circumcision. (Gal. ii. 19.) In Gal. i. 19, Paul, speaking of his coming to Jerusalem, says, *I saw Peter; and other apostles saw I none; but* (*ει μη*. Rev. xxi. 27) *I did see James, the Lord's brother*.

We can well understand why the Lord did not personally call James to any distinguished office; not that the purity of his holy intentions could for a moment be doubted, but that in his foreseeing wisdom he should not encourage others by his example. James did hold in Jerusalem a very important position, even superior to that of one of the Lord's own apostles, and he was not an apostle; he was a bishop. Whom would the Church elect for this very important position sooner than him, if a believer, who stood in so close a relation to the Lord? Further, there has ever been in the Church of Christ three orders, to which history

abundantly testifies ; and their existence may be traced up to a very few years from the apostles' time. In that interval no one would have invented a lie, which, taken up by the one universal Church, would have been fatal to its acceptance among men.

In the New Testament we meet with the words *αποστολοι*, *αγγελοι*, *επισκοποι*, *πρεσβυτεροι*, and *διακονοι*. Who were the *αποστολοι*? (2 Cor. viii. 23.) They were called *αγγελοι*, or angels—heads of the several Churches, as in Rev. i., ii., iii. ; where we cannot fail to identify Polycarp, a Bishop of Smyrna, the faithful witness to Christ. The *αποστολοι* were brethren of Paul and Titus, as Epaphroditus. (Phil. ii. 25.) The words *αποστολοι* and *αγγελοι* express the same idea, only the former respects the act of sending, the latter those sent.

When the immediate apostles of the Lord had passed away, the Church hesitated to confer the title of *αποστολος* upon the heads of the several *παροικιαι*, as it was the distinguishing title of the Lord's immediate followers. Nor did they use the term *αγγελος* for obvious reasons. However, the course they adopted is not without precedent. In Acts xiii. 1, we read of *προφηται* prophets, instead of *παρακλητοι*. The special work of the prophet is primarily to exhort—*παρακαλειν*, to minister *λογον παρακλησεως*—a word of exhortation. Their proper title, then, would be *παρακλητοι*. But the Lord had already applied this term to himself and the Holy Ghost, as the true Paracletes or Comforters. Hence, Luke hesitates to apply it to those who were to exhort and comfort the souls of men. (Acts xiii. 15 ; xv. 32.) So the Church hesitated to continue the term *αποστολος*, but looked for another. She turned to the two words expressing the second order, *επισκοπος* and *πρεσβυτερος*. These words were used indifferently, and were applied to the same persons in the Church of Ephesus. (Acts xx. 28 and 17.) The former referred to the office of overseer—that is, one having a *κληρος* or charge ; the latter had respect to the age of him who filled the office. Which of these words would best supply the need ? Surely overseer, as it implied the other. From *επισκοπος* we obtain “bishop.” Since, then, there were bishops from the time of the apostles, James was one, and, as such, presided at the first Council of the Church, held at Jerusalem. So we trace in the Scriptures the three orders, which are ever testifying to the Trinity in their covenant

relation, the foundation of all blessings in creation, redemption, and grace.

5. They were to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. They were lost, they had despised redemption and blessing. Nevertheless they must be sought, as if their aggravated guilt invested them with greater interest. They were yet beloved by the Father, for the fathers' sakes—that is, for the covenant's sake, the Father's own sake. They were not to go into the way of the Gentiles, nor into any city of the Samaritans. The lost sheep of Israel were greater sinners than these. The purpose of God stands. In the seed of Abraham are all nations blessed. If Israel had been the seed of the true Father, they would have learned Christ; then in them all nations would be blessed. But neglecting their great salvation, they have fallen, and now are the objects of the abundant grace of God.

Now, having respect to the Lord himself, we ask, Why did he tell them not to go into the way of the Gentiles, and into the city of the Samaritans to enter not, when the Gentiles showed the most distinguishing faith, and the Samaritans were especially regarded, as they obeyed the truth? The words of Jesus are most pregnant with truth. As Israel, the Lord regards them as redeemed, and blessed of God; as sheep, they were the objects of unremitting care and solicitude with the great Shepherd of Israel. But, as lost, they have wandered—are torn and prostrate. Go to these. Are they, then, dearer than others? No; not only do we see in them greater guilt, but also towards them the boundless mercy and love of God. They were to go to these as redeemed and blessed, and, despite their degradation, call them to obey the truth, to obey what is, to realise the normal condition of their being. This is the salient truth. It is the ground we all must take when we go forth to minister the Word. We may devise schemes or systems of religion—that is, a firm belief in, and public confession of Christian truth—but then we are no farther than that what is common to all; for the grace of God bringeth salvation to all men. More, devils confess to the Holy One of God, to the Son of God, to the Christ the Son of God, with a clearer apprehension of his person and his work than they who rest in some form or scheme of traditional religion. The grace of God, then, which is common to all, must be made effective—

the invisible substance must be demonstrated in the life. In the words of Jude, we must build up ourselves upon our most holy faith, and keep ourselves in the divine nature by its operating principle—love. (Rom. viii. 2.) Our commission, then, is to preach the kingdom of the heavens—a kingdom and a Triune God as man's inheritance or blessing. Of this the outward signs testified: they healed the sick, cleansed the lepers; in other words, raised the dead, and cast out devils. The order in these pairs of signs is inverted. It is so by attraction, which is not uncommon. Freely ye have received, freely give. But do men know what they have received? Do they know how to give? How can they freely give if they modify the truth of God? How can they freely give if they do not present the truth in all its integrity, according to the everlasting covenant of a Triune God? Peter gave when he said, *In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.*

9. It was, indeed, no earthly treasure they had to give, for they had no gold, no silver, nor brass in their purses, no scrip, no second garment, no shoes, nor staff, for they witnessed to a kingdom, that they belonged to it, possessed its power and its blessings. The visible condition represented the truth, of which they were the heralds. But when Christ *had visibly departed* from them, this visible state of things had an end; and they who had provided neither gold, nor silver, nor brass, nor scrip, nor two coats, nor staves, were then to take their purse and their scrip, and when they had no sword were to sell their garments and buy one; so entirely was this visible state of things done away. Then it was an invisible experience, and they inwardly and practically knew how that they *were crucified to the world and filled with the Holy Ghost.* Thus qualified, labourers are sent forth by the Lord. And if we would pray for labourers, we must pray for such—no idlers, worldlings, hirelings, but true labourers, true shepherds; and such are worthy of their meat, to support and sustain them in their blessed work. Paul and Barnabas were separated unto the work, and unto a special grace, to which the Holy Ghost invisibly called them, and to which the Church commended them. In this way the Lord sends forth men duly qualified as physicians to heal, as shepherds to feed, and as labourers to gather in the shocks of corn full ripe into his garner.

He, then, who magnifies his office, will magnify the grace of God. We know not what pertains to a physician of souls, to a shepherd of the sheep of God, or to a labourer to gather in the spiritual harvest, until we ourselves are completely merged in our office, which can never be until we have entered in at the door, and so learned Christ. And there is no office in the service of God which has not with it a special grace, and brings a special blessing.

11. Can any be accounted worthy before the preaching of the Word? If so, whence this worthiness? or what is it? There is something in a large heart and a generous spirit, which, with disinterested and unselfish love, seeks to enrich, to benefit others beyond its means; for it is, indeed, a congenial soil for simple truth to take root in and flourish. Such may have a moral worth; yea, it is at least a warm sign of that which should be at the foundation. This worthiness may, however, be more distinctly understood by its opposite. Paul, addressing the Jews in Antioch of Pisidia, said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: *but seeing ye put it from you*, and judge yourselves not worthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. They thrust from them the Word of life, and so were not worthy. (Acts xiii. 46.) The worthiness of which the Lord speaks is identical with the conduct of those in verse 48. *Oi τεταγμενοι*—they set themselves in order—they disposed their heart because they feared God. As the apostle said, “Children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.” It is, then, within the power of any man to be worthy to dispose his heart into the way of eternal truth—to ask, and to receive. The Father does not set himself against any man; neither has he left any in a helpless and hopeless condition. The word *τεταγμενοι* is not “ordained,” as if he had decreed them unto life; but that they set themselves in order, they submit themselves to the truth—to the attainment of it.

When the apostles found such, they were to enter their house, and there abide. Thus, the Lord places the Christian on a far higher stage than any man can attain to in the possession of earthly honour, wealth, or distinction. It is not every man that is worthy to receive him who comes in the name of the Lord.

Whatever distinctions exist among men, they are on another level, far inferior to that of a Christian man. He, then, that is worthy will consider it, and claim it as his right and privilege to receive you, helping forward the work of the Lord. The Lord, then, is not inculcating voluntary poverty as an ordinance of Christian life, but is teaching, through the outward condition of his disciples, what were the inward and spiritual blessings of the kingdom.

12. As ye enter into a house that is worthy, salute it. The Lord not only gives dignity to his messengers, but teaches a reciprocity of heart and mind. If the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it—even the full blessings of the grace of God. But if, after you have entered, your peace be not received, then let it return to you again—they are not worthy. Of the Word of life nothing is lost. If peace goes forth it will be to the blessing of some one, else it returns whence it came. Ye must, therefore, preserve inviolate your integrity, that the peace gone forth may return. How important are these words, *Let your peace return unto you*. What careful earnestness—what cautious temper—does it not enforce! Every man who takes the office of minister must be one in season and out of season, lest, while experiencing this world's hospitality, he forgets his office, and degenerates to the level of the earthly minded. Christianity is not obtrusive, but is powerful in its unobtrusiveness.

This teaching of the Lord Jesus necessitates a perfect self-negation—the cross; for not to receive them was to reject the kingdom of the heavens. Then were they to shake off the dust of their feet. Is there not in this an awful intimation of what shall be hereafter—that when God shall roll back the tide of ungodliness, it will come with increased and multiplied power upon them! The dust of the feet, from which the Lord cleansed Peter, signified the defilement the soul contracts while here in the body. To shake off the dust of their feet signified that if they will not have their peace, they shall have their defilements; and thus, at the day of judgment, ungodliness will reap not only the fruit of its own doing, but sin in all its terrible enormity, and *accumulations* of guilt in its opposition to the cleansing power of Christ.

15. Where privileges have abounded, and the mercy of God

has striven in vain, there greater will be the condemnation. Sin, as sin, is not so loathsome to God, as it is in opposition to the kingdom. In the outward and visible world, the most degraded and debased condition is more tolerable than that spiritual state which resists the kingdom and a Triune God in all the fulness of his grace.

16. The Lord is not ignorant of what his servants would meet with while bearing their testimony; still, he directs them as to their course of action. I send you as sheep among wolves. I send you among those who will so thoroughly serve their master, that instead of being shepherds of the flock, they will tear, worry, lay them prostrate. Nevertheless I, even I, send you, who am your Master, the good Shepherd, and no power shall pluck you out of my hand. Be ye, then, prudent as serpents—sincere, unmixed, as doves. The children of this world are more prudent than the children of light. In all their ways they adapt their means to their end. So adapt your means to your end—yea, more, be prudent as serpents. Be sincere, be unmixed as doves. In these two symbols, as opposites, we have represented the two kingdoms. The serpent is the devil; the dove, the Holy Ghost. Be, then, not ignorant of the devices of Satan, but use and manifest the power of heaven; be clothed with the panoply of God; be pure and holy, maintaining in its integrity and purity that life to which ye testify when ye go forth in my name.

17. But beware of men. In the serpent you perceive the enemy; but beware of men. They, bringing you before kings, will be a testimony to that antagonistic spirit that would destroy the sheep. Yet, as it is against the holy principles of my kingdom, man's rebellion will be a testimony to me. "Surely, in refined society we shall not find the enemy." "This prediction of Jesus is past." Be not deceived. In your work and labour of love you, if you be true to the covenant of God, shall fare no better among men than as sheep among wolves, however simple your aim, or holy your purpose, to impart an everlasting peace—however diligent to turn everything to advantage. Men rooted in their prejudices, maddened at your calm and unfaltering consistency, will deliver you up to the council, and to scourging, and to be brought before governors and kings for my sake. It will, however, be a testimony to me, the Son of David, the mighty

Deliverer, the true Physician, who neither slumbers nor sleeps, because I am in you, and you in me, and who am come to cast out the old serpent the devil.

19. You are my witnesses, be not dismayed. Look not upon earthly things. You testify to a kingdom that is over all, and above all. You will be prisoners for my sake, then be not scandalized in me. The providence of God is perfect. It is, indeed, easy enough to call ourselves disciples of the Lord, to take his words to ourselves, and fling them in the face of those who do not think just as we do. But, they are given us that we may prove ourselves whether we are truly what we profess to be—whether we are of the kingdom or not. If we are, then, in the most trying circumstances of life, we shall confess him; and it will be not we who speak, but the Spirit of our Father speaking in us. Thus, it will be only as we testify to Christ and the indwelling Spirit; and so be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

21. Belonging, then, to the kingdom—knowing Christ and doing the will of our Father which is in heaven, we enter into true and everlasting relationships. So antagonistic is the world to the kingdom, that earthly relationships, which are warm and living witnesses of the true, will be swallowed up in the unrelenting hostility of all that is visible to the invisible. Sin denies the substance, therefore the mere shadows will be no bar to its cruel malignity. Brother will deliver brother to death; the father will deliver the child; and children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.

22. These relationships are inclusive: "Ye shall be hated of all for my name's sake." If, then, we can truly call him Lord, Lord, we are, in his name, attesting Christ and the Spirit in a holy, self-denying love. Then shall we be misunderstood, and hated, not only of men in general, or of men of different parties and sects, but even of all those who are bound to us by the ties of nature. And is there not, now, a more subtle form of antagonism to all that is true, lovely, and of good report, than open hostility, in the powerful influence of a highly cultivated and refined state of society, progressing with rapid strides, as mind achieves its triumphs over the wild forces of matter, and adduces a thousand arguments with a reverence for religion against the simple truths of the covenant?

The Lord does not leave us without some intimation that persecution in some form will continue to the final accomplishment of all things. The end will come, but not until the Gospel has gone over the cities of the earth. The universal, dogged unbelief will induce Christian men, dwelling in the midst of extraordinary developments, to depart to less favoured, less privileged cities of the world; and so the hostility of sin will subserve the purpose of God, and hasten on the end. But it is for us to endure, to possess our souls in our patience, for thus only can we run the race, agonize the good agony of faith. As it is also written, "Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the righteous shall live by faith: but if he lets down the sail, my soul hath no pleasure in him." (Heb. x. 36—38.) It is only by keeping the sail to the wind that we can bring the bark safe into harbour, otherwise we make shipwreck of faith.

To flee from persecution is compatible with trust in God. The life of a Christian is a treasure, not to be lightly esteemed, for he is the salt of the earth, the light of the world. The Lord gives a reason for departing. He makes the wrath of man to praise him. The hostility of some becomes the blessing of others. Depart, he says, into other cities, for ye shall not accomplish the cities of Israel till the Son of man come. While this may be true in a restricted sense, that they shall not go through their native land before the destruction of Jerusalem, it is also true that his faithful servants shall not have gone to the uttermost parts of the earth, and brought one and another kingdom to become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ, until the day of judgment. Therefore, so long as that day tarries, and persecution, in whatever form, arises, there will be a city to flee to, wherein to work the work of God.

24. The Lord continues from the stand-point of the kingdom. No learner is above his teacher. In our relation to the covenant, the Son of God is our teacher. He only can reveal the Father. He reveals in us; and so we learn of him, the Father. Nor is the servant above his lord. This is true, in our relation to him as sinners. He is Lord to the overthrow of all adverse power. If, then, we would follow Christ, and learn of him, we must take his

yoke, know the fellowship of his sufferings—not in the mere disappointments of life, but in a conformity to his death. Let us eschew that morbid habit of regarding the loss of the things of this life a cross. Whereas, we must bear with meekness the one and only cross, the cross of Christ, by whom we are crucified to the world, and the world to us, and so suffer the loss of all things.

25. It is enough that the disciple be as his teacher, the servant as his lord. In the truest sense, we must be as our teacher, know the Father, and, as our Lord, overcome as he overcame. We must hate sin for its own sake, whether in ourselves or others. We cannot be the Lord's disciples except we bear his cross—know Christ. Then are we as he is: and, possessing the same blessing, we seek the restoration of our fellow-man. (Luke vi. 40: John xiii. 16.) While the Lord Jesus bears his testimony to the kingdom, his enemies call him Beelzebul—the habitation of Baal—that is, of Satan—to whom they ascribed the working of his miracles. So the Lord understands their words, as he opposes to them the truth—ourselves *as his own* house, who are his true witnesses. We are the house of God. God dwelleth in us. Christ is a Son over his own house; whose house are we, *if we hold fast our confidence firm unto the end*. (Heb. iii. 6.) If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebul, how much more them of his household, whom they regarded as born in sin, and who rejected their teaching.

26. Fear them not. How shall we, if we hold fast our confidence in the truth? For though the kingdom and its glory be now obscured, all shall be revealed—yea, all the ways of the Lord, the mysterious workings of his grace, the interlinkings of his providence. All he has done in time for his own glory, and the salvation of man, shall be revealed. Then, however aggressive and hostile be the powers of evil, we need not fear. All the counterworkings of evil—its pernicious efforts, destructive tendencies, and never-ceasing hostilities, all the unholy, impious, and wicked ways of men, shall be known. Indeed, it is a solemn truth, that every word spoken is effective for good or for evil; and for every idle or vain word man shall give account.

27. The disciples were, as yet, in darkness: their knowledge was as yet only after the flesh. However, the Lord thereby con-

veys to our apprehension corresponding spiritual truth, what he is doing in light. Although these men proclaimed the kingdom at hand, cast out devils, and healed all manner of sickness, they were not, as yet, truly in the kingdom of light. They testified to what God had done—that all men were placed in light, and to which, as made effective by faith, visible things testified; but, as yet, they lacked faith. While Jesus tells them that they are in darkness, he intimates that they will be in the light, and this in this present life. So, then, when they, being born of water and of the Spirit, see and enter the kingdom of light, and shall understand, in a deep and abiding sense, the overthrow of the kingdom of darkness, then shall they speak and testify in light what was spoken to them in darkness. And what they hear with their ears, then, as the indwelling Spirit of their Father shall speak in them, and bring to their remembrance all things which he had spoken, so shall they boldly, before all men, proclaim these things, that they may honour the Father.

Fear them not. Our life does not consist in the things we possess, but in God. This is our true life. To realise it is to live it. And we then possess a blessed freedom from the powers of darkness, and enjoy a well grounded hope in the knowledge of the everlasting Father. Then let evil work. It may concentrate itself in its unceasing hostility; but it can reach only the body: it cannot touch the soul, which moves in light—being light in the Lord. This is not in anywise a contradiction of the admonition to flee when they persecute you. When we take our stand-point in light, all is clear to us. And we may rest assured that where fear is, there is darkness: for fear is bondage. Enslaved by this debasing passion, we cannot walk in the light. We are not to fear them who kill the body; but rather to fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Or, rather, we are not to have this fear, but another, and in it honour the Father. It is the beginning of wisdom—a holy, reverential, filial fear. If we have not this, we possess that—a slavish fear. Thus, the Lord, while he reveals the Father, teaches that the destruction of the soul is his strange work. Rather, man destroys himself. And it is only when we compel him to take our ground, that he tells us to fear him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell. The everlasting Father does not want us to tremble like devils, but to

enter into a holy relationship, and find his will to be the law of our life and being.

29, 30. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father. God has not surrendered his world. He has not given his creatures over to destruction. To man, his vicegerent, he gave dominion, because he was in the image and likeness of God. A usurper has seized it. But God has never surrendered his Paternity, but has abolished death; and all creation attests it. A sparrow cannot die, cannot fall to the ground, without him. He has created all, even the most repulsive of reptiles, and supplies their need. The world teems with life, which attests the presence of the Father. Then, where man would limit the Paternity, he cannot. He may go down into the dark caverns of the earth, split open the hard rock, whose cell has been hermetically sealed for ages, and bring to light the toad, ugly and venomous; fathom the deep depths of the briny ocean; or behold the coral reefs emerging from the wilderness of waters, composed of slightly organised forms of animal life, and all attest the universal Father. The Lord hath made all things for himself—yea, even the wicked for the day of evil, who will, at that day, to their everlasting shame and confusion, and despite their own wickedness, bear testimony to the Paternity of God. Then, if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without him, may we know what it is to be with him, and possess his love: for perfect love casteth out fear. And what more touching testimony to God's compassionate love and care for us can there be than that he has numbered the very hairs of our head, so that no one of them can fall to the ground without him.

31. Since, then, we are of more value than many sparrows, and every hair of our heads is numbered, we know that the everlasting Father, with whom there is no respect of persons, has provided for our spiritual necessities. He does not allow a single thing to affect us without his providence. And it is by his permission that sin still assaults us, in order that we might find in him, not only a sure refuge, but an exceeding great reward. If this be universal, then it is the bounden duty, as it is the most blessed privilege, of every man, that he should know the Father in Christ Jesus. Who is there on earth so ennobled as he who confesses Christ the Son of God? But if we do not confess him, we hate

the Father. It rests, then, with every man to give effect to the grace of God, which has preceded all men. Christ having died for all—the Spirit being poured out upon all—every man, in the sight of God, is of more value than many sparrows; yet, to reject the blessing of God, and to despise his mercies, is man's fearful prerogative.

The Lord Jesus addresses men—not as if he had died for believers, or had chosen some only to salvation—he addresses all as in one and the same relation. Those who confess him before men, he will confess before his Father; and those who deny him, he will deny before his Father. What would be the worth of this declaration, if every man had not the power of confessing or denying him? Or, why should he speak thus, if grace be irresistible? All men are upon one common platform; all are redeemed; all are blessed in the seed of Abraham, in the revelation of a common Father, whose love is perfect, and cannot be capricious.

34. Even while the large heart of the Lord opens, and streams of perennial blessings flow to all, man, so prone to evil, so dull of apprehension, must be again and again taught the condition indispensable to enjoy them. Think not, he says, that I am come to cast peace upon the earth: I came not to cast peace, but a sword. Here he reproves that prevailing false teaching that would preach peace without the sword—the Holy Spirit without Christ. It is easy enough to confess Christ with our lips, but to do so according to God is to fight with the sword. This sword must we use before there can be peace. The sword which he casts upon the earth is not persecution at the hand of the enemy, but that which was in the hand of the destroying angel, even *holiness* in its antagonism to sin. He that confesses Christ is holiness unto the Lord. He is the salt of the earth, and, so long as it maintains its savour, it is in antagonism to all corruption. Since Christ, then, is either confessed or denied, all are on the one side or the other; for he that is not with me is against me, says the Lord. Peace is, indeed, for all men, but he has cast upon the earth a sword; and he sets a man against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. Is this the moral lawgiver? How does the

moralist reconcile this teaching of Jesus with his own notions? He cannot. As it would be a great error to look for the peace of the Gospel without the sword, so is it necessary as against the uncrucified heart everywhere, without regard to the relations of life. The relations here respect only time. Our true condition in Christ respects eternity. Of necessity, therefore, he who confesses Christ is at variance with him who possesses him not, even as in one man the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, for they are contrary. The sword is that of Jehovah of Hosts; and he who wields it will do so in all the details of daily life. All will bear the savour of, will be weighted with, will express the truth. It will come home to his own heart, and touch nature's feelings—yea, all the sweet and cherished relationships of life, for there can be no compromise or modification of the truth, since we either confess or deny Christ. We must possess peace in the integrity and inviolability of our faith. How fearful, then, is sin, when a man, in the midst of holy and heaven-born ties—in the midst of his family, while testifying to the sweet and holy relationships of eternity, shall find there his foes. He may, indeed, come still nearer home, and in his own heart find there, rising up continually, his great adversary, whom God alone can cast down.

37. When the Lord Jesus sent forth his disciples to witness to the covenant in all its fulness, he taught them, and so gave them an example for teaching others. The sword sets a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother. Many, who go forth to teach, very readily assert this, when others do not agree with them; but the Lord, anticipating this one-sided and, therefore, erroneous teaching, leads a man back into himself; saying, He that loveth father and mother more than me, is not worthy of me. The Lord has put into our hands that which makes foes of those we love. And now, he says, if we do not love him more than them, we are not worthy of him. In the Son of God we know the Father, and so have peace. We have the substance of which earthly relations are but shadows. And we love the shadows, because of the substance. Then, our love is a pure and holy love. There are many instances of a strong, self-denying, warm affection, but not of the outflow of the divine nature. They are shadows, as it were, of the true. Nevertheless, we

admire them. And so they are an argument irresistible for possessing the substance, the divine life in all the power of its operating principle. Then, of necessity, we love him more than them. And we cannot attain to this without first having the sword, or, rather, carrying our cross—his cross is ours—and so follow him. If we despise his cross, we despise his love, and so are not worthy of him. In truth, his teaching necessitates a practical experience of the truth, demonstrated in the life, in order to be worthy of it. So we confess him.

39. The Lord, in his foreseeing wisdom, guards his truth from the strange predilections of men. What the cross is, he here distinctly teaches. So important is it, in its true signification, and the order which it holds in the economy of God, that the Lord again and again inculcates it, and especially on them who go forth in his name. Without the cross, as a primary experimental truth, how can we heal, feed, or gather into the garner of the Lord? There is no mistaking the teaching; we must take our cross. He that findeth his life shall lose it. In other words, he who does not take the cross shall lose life (eternal). But he that loseth his life for my sake, says the Lord: this only by the cross, shall find it—life eternal. He gives up this life with all its cherished relationships, and finding eternal life, enters upon everlasting relationships, for he is a child of the everlasting Father. Such, then, is the indispensable qualification of him who would go forth into the harvest of the Lord.

40. No statement can be more momentous, in our relation one to another, than this. While it confers upon him, who goes forth duly qualified, the most exalted and distinguished dignity, it enforces the obligation that he be worthy of it; that he go in the name of Christ, the Son of God. So that they who receive him *may receive not only him, but Christ, the Son of God*, and in receiving him may receive the Father, who sent him. Then is it we thus find life, for we possess the Christ, and our adoption of sons.

Again, the Lord observes the order. He repeats it, that we may not be mistaken, for he foresaw how men would mistake his words, and *mutilate the covenant* of his grace. The order is identical with that of the talents. (Matt. xxv. 15—29.) He begins at the stand-point where the chapter also begins. He who is a prophet

is a righteous man—he is a disciple of Christ. A prophet, then, possesses the Spirit of the Son, having learned Christ. *We rob men when we fail to go duly qualified.* But when we go as a prophet, and, as such, testify to the cross, the love, and the glory, and are so received, then he that receives a prophet in the name of a prophet—that is, as truly such—enters into a prophet's reward, for he communicates of his own deep experience in the things of God. So of a righteous man, will he receive a righteous man's reward—the presence of the divine nature.

42. And whosoever shall give to drink a cup of cold water unto one of these little ones only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward. He has not yet embraced the truth in its fulness; he is only a disciple. Here, in this careful wording, the gracious Teacher of Israel leads us to a clear and distinct apprehension of *the principles of the covenant*. The little ones, in the name of a disciple, bear the cross. They differ from the righteous man, as he not only bears the cross, but possesses the divine life. Whosoever, then, shall give the disciple a cup of cold *water*—the gift itself is a recognition of discipleship, for the cross of Christ cleanses us from sin—at the same time testifies that the disciple is not greater than his Master, who had not where to lay his head, as he has not a cup of cold water. He, therefore, who recognises a disciple, and honours him, shall not lose his reward. Christianity cannot be despised. Let the Christian maintain his distinguished dignity, and let brotherly love prevail.

CHAPTER XI.

1 AND it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.

2 NOW when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent
3 two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or
4 do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show
5 John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their
sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the
6 dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them. And
blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

7 And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning
John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with
8 the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft
9 raiment? behold, they that wear soft *clothing* are in kings' houses. But
what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more
10 than a prophet. For this is *he*, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my
11 messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily
I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen
a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the
12 kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the
Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent
13 take it by force. For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John.
14 And if ye will receive *it*, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that
15 hath ears to hear, let him hear. But whereunto shall I liken this gene-
16 ration? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto
17 their fellows, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced;
18 we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. For John came
19 neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of
man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous,
and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justi-
fied of her children.

20 Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works
21 were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe
unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you,
had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in
22 sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for

23 Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell : for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in
 24 Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

25 At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and
 26 prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father : for so it
 27 seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father : and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father ; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and *he* to whomsoever the Son will reveal *him*.
 28 Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you
 29 rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me ; for I am meek and lowly
 30 in heart : and *ye* shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

AGAIN, Matthew mentions the twelve, and tells us that Jesus, having commanded them, departs thence to teach and preach in *their cities*. Does the Lord then confine himself to the cities of his disciples ? It would contravene the universality of the kingdom. The *κηρυσσειν* is the heralding forth of the kingdom, so calling men to repentance. The twelve indicate the universality of the kingdom ; and so their cities would imply the whole human family, and co-extensive with this is the harvest. He, ther, as a prophet, and as our great Exemplar in teaching and in preaching, goes forth. The Bible is not a sealed book. The mystery of God is now clearly revealed. What, then, is the burden of the Lord's teaching but the whole covenant of God, even, accordingly, as he instructed his disciples.

2. John in prison heard the works of Christ. The conduct of the Baptist is considered to be very difficult of explanation. This difficulty is an instance of the uncertainty belonging to the interpretation of any passage, when the unbroken chain of ideas in the writer's mind is disregarded, or not perceived : which cannot be perceived unless his ground is made at starting, and we understand with him the covenant *as set forth* in the Old Testament Scriptures. The difficulty is confessed, the chain of ideas is not thought of, and the exact place he holds in the covenant of God—that is, the truth to which he testifies—is not perceived. The

Baptist is a remarkable illustration of the Lord's teaching, "Ye will be hated of all men *for my name's sake*." The cross is the glory of the Christian. To this the Baptist, in his name, life, teaching, baptism, and relation to Jesus, distinctly and emphatically testified. He fulfilled the truth on that side of the covenant for the Lord Jesus, which is a *preparation* for the indwelling Spirit. In all, he taught that he was crucified to the world, and the world to him. He was a disciple, for he bore the cross. He was a righteous man, for he was filled with the Holy Ghost. He was a prophet, for he testified to him who was come according to the purpose of the Father. As a disciple, he was inwardly what he expressed outwardly; and so, trials, persecutions, and sufferings, were best calculated for deepening the experience of the truth to which he witnessed.

John, then, is a distinguished example wherein we see the perfect providence of God, and the perfect hatred of man, to the truth. They had accounted John to be a prophet; but instead of receiving him, they cast him into prison. The truth, in its simple majesty, is independent of man. However, then, we may regard the ability of this or that man, and, in our judgment, determine what should be, the perfect providence of God overrules all, and makes all to work *together* for good to them that love him. All creation bears witness to the covenant—to the invisible power and the Godhead—so that men are without excuse. Therefore, it was not necessary, according to the covenant, that God should, when his mercy and love were trampled under foot, send again this faithful witness among men, for when they acknowledged him a prophet, a righteous man, a disciple, they received him not.

We may be most thankful for this record. In it we find the Baptist is no hero, but one of like passions as ourselves. It is remarked that the term "Christ" is mentioned by Matthew, here only, alone. But we are not told why. If men would only suggest to themselves the "why?" the "how?" and the "what?" more frequently, they might unexpectedly find themselves landed on that vantage ground that would enable them to see more distinctly the whole counsel of God. The works of Christ were, according to his name, the carrying of the cross, the casting out of devils, the breaking of every yoke, and so the setting of the

captive free. The Baptist had lived and taught this. And the Lord was now sending forth men, unlearned men, commanding them accordingly to bear witness to the Christ. He had, moreover, told them to pray for more labourers: that the harvest was plenteous, but the labourers were few. Here, in captivity, was the most distinguished among men, who bore witness to the Christ, and who felt truly all that the Lord had said of the harvest. Surely he does not doubt Jesus being the Christ; but he does doubt his perfect providence, even as Moses and Elijah did. To this he may have given expression in the presence of his own disciples, who were yet smarting under the check they received when they asked the Lord why did not his disciples fast as they. They might feel that they knew *the Christ* better than the Lord's disciples; they would therefore strengthen the belief in the Baptist's mind that he *was overlooked*.

Is he, then, moved by fear or pride? Doubtless by a mixture of both. Either is to be carnal, to put off Christ, to be scandalized in him. At this time, John had nothing of true discipleship. A sparrow cannot fall to the ground without the Father. But if we be in Christ, how shall anything happen to us without the Father? It was in the ignoring of this fact, that, however trying the circumstances, John showed that he was not then a true disciple. This is the truth we must have impressed on our minds. It is, indeed, set before us, in bold relief. We do not ask, "Did the Baptist fear death?" But we do assert that the moment we forget the Father—ignore his character, as if the world was not his, or his kingdom was not established—we become subject to fear, which is bondage, and it exhibits itself in some one or other of its ten thousand forms.

It is not a question whether any of the circumstances were in extenuation of his fault, but whether he was, at that time, a disciple of Christ. If not, then we cannot fail, having regard to John, in all the bearings of his character and office, to discover that the cross has no regard to earthly distinctions, however exalted; nor is it in anywise modified to suit the circumstances of any man.

The Baptist, then, used an *indirect* means, in order to remind the Lord that a faithful witness was now in prison, and would, if released, go forth to bear his testimony: as if he who numbers

the hairs of our heads, who is about our path, and spies out all our ways, whose compassions fail not, needed any such reminder.

Thus have we clearly before us the perfect providence of God, the perfect hatred of man to the truth, and the necessity of the cross; which is not contrary to the providence of God, but is superior to all the assaults of the Evil One, whatever be his instruments; but, failing this, how the most distinguished cannot be a prophet of the Lord.

4. The Lord, as a true prophet, maintained his ground, and reproves the Baptist and his disciples. The Baptist, instead of questioning the Lord's advent, should have prepared his own disciples to receive him. He was to prepare the way of the Lord, to attest the truth, indispensable in order to receive the divine nature—that is, the cross as the way of righteousness. Now that his work was drawing to a close, we see how, in the last hours of his life, the enemy obtains a temporary triumph.

The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. It is independent of all outward things and circumstances. The Baptist had heard of the works of Christ, which testified to the kingdom. They not only expressed it, but existed because of it. The disciples of John had seen these works, and informed him of them. However, the Lord does not work any special miracle in order to satisfy these men or their master. The same things which others heard and saw, they hear and see. The very things which occasioned his disquietude are to be the evidences of his coming. He taught them how that he was with the Baptist, though he knew it not, and that far greater yokes than earthly ones were removed. Thus, the Lord taught them that the imprisonment of his servant was no argument against the truth. Again are they taught that miracles were only outward signs of truths, which they ought to know and experience. No special teaching is vouchsafed to any—what is enough for all is enough for John and his disciples. Here he has again the first principles of discipleship. It is so with all. Whenever we ignore the cross, and the carnal mind has the ascendancy, *then to the cross again* must we come. Besides this, a testimony is borne to the conscience of the Baptist. It is there that the still small voice is heard. He is led to the words of the prophet (Is. xxxv. 4): Say to them that are of a fearful

or hasty heart, Be strong, and fear not; behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense: he will come and save you. This was also the testimony of the Baptist, as he cried (Is. xl. 10), Behold the Lord God will come against the strong, and his arm shall rule for him; behold his reward is with him. *Blessed, then, is he who is not scandalized in me.* Thus, the Lord leaves the Baptist no other ground than that to which he had himself testified as preparing the way of the Lord. For where Christ is, in all the power of the reality, there will be the recompense. It is in the Son of God. But, in the message, there is a solemn warning not to depart from him. This is what the Baptist was doing: hence the reproof and the warning. Blessed, then, are they who, despite all that can happen to the body, endure unto the end.

7. When the messengers were departed, the Lord turned to the multitudes. The blessedness of being in Christ, and not being scandalized by anything, in the perfect providence of God, by the wiles of Satan, or the deceitfulness of one's own heart, is for all. Reading their hearts, their inward thoughts, he takes them on their own ground, and, in the most simple language, would lead them to consider, in order that they might apprehend the truth.

They doubtless inferred from his remarks that he had condemned the Baptist, and so began to divest their minds of his testimony. But he proved that he was more than man, as he arrested them in their inmost thoughts, and thence asked them, saying, "What went ye out into the wilderness to see?" He now not only vindicates the truth, and his faithful servant the Baptist, but also seeks to lead the multitudes to a correct apprehension of what is. "Did ye go to see a reed shaken with the wind?" קנה is a reed. It grows in water. Thus, growing it represents the blessings of the Gospel: the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass, and *reeds*, and rushes. (Isa. xxxv. 7.) It is also the sweet cane, *calamus aromaticus*, one of the principal ingredients of the anointing oil, used for anointing the tabernacle (Ex. xxx. 23), and for acceptable offerings. (Is. xliii. 24: Jer. vi. 19—21.) The water and the anointing oil attest the work of Christ and the Spirit respectively. The reed without water is driven by the wind, and broken, such

is Egypt. (Is. xxxvi. 6.) The Lord would say to those about him, "Though in this instance, in vindicating the truth, I condemn the Baptist, what did ye find in him, when ye went out to him in the wilderness? Did he not, as I now do, vindicate the covenant of his God, when he called you a generation of vipers, and warned you of the wrath to come? Did he in anywise contradict the truth?" No answer is given. He now asks whether they went to see a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft raiment are in kings' houses! By this question he would ask them whether the Baptist did not attest the Christ, not as an earthly king, whose words should be heard in the streets, but as the heavenly and invisible in all the power of Melchizedek? But what went ye out in the wilderness to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. Not only was he a reed buried in water—one distinctly attesting a burial and death with Christ, and attesting Christ as a king in the casting down of everything adverse—but also more than a prophet. We need not stop to notice the worn-out reason that he was the subject of prophecy, or was near the kingdom, but repeat simply, that he was more than a prophet, because he fulfilled the one side of the great Exemplar's character, which Jesus, as the pure, holy, undefiled, and immaculate One, could not. Thus did the Lord vindicate the Baptist, and establish his testimony.

10, 11. It would be no interpretation of the prophecy which the Lord cites, to say, the Baptist was a subject of prophecy, for in this prophecy Jesus shows wherein the Baptist was more than a prophet. He, as the visible forerunner, goes before the face, not of Christ, but of the Son of God. But it is the truth to which he witnessed, that *prepares* the heart for the indwelling presence of Jehovah, and so prepares the way of the Lord. So distinguished, then, was he in his relation to the Lord Jesus, and in revealing the power of Christ in a baptism into death, that he was most truly above all that is born of woman. Notwithstanding, the least in the kingdom of the heavens is greater than he; for he that is in the kingdom is not only crucified to all that is born of woman, but is born of the Spirit. The high and exalted position of the Baptist in his outward relation to the Lord Jesus—we say outward, because he was of the kingdom, and a distinguished saint and preacher of it—was, in that which was born

of woman, and which made him superior to every one, however distinguished, however ennobled, as so born.

The high importance of the leading truth throughout this chapter, a truth ever foremost in the Lord's teaching, cannot be too highly estimated, *yet it is lost sight of*. Although it be incidentally taught, yet, deprived of its position in the economy of grace, it is virtually and truly lost sight of.

We must never forget that there are two kingdoms, one within the other—the kingdom of this world within the kingdom of the heavens, *imperium in imperio*. The words, “least in the kingdom of the heavens,” is an instance showing that Scripture expressions are not stereotyped. The great truths of the everlasting kingdom are the unchanging and unfailing verities, which words but imperfectly convey. Thus, in truth, in chap. v., verse 19, it is, *Such are not in the kingdom ; here they are*. Nevertheless, the kingdom of the heavens is established, and Melchizedek rules over all.

12. The Lord continues, and brings before his hearers more distinctly John, in his relation to the kingdom, as representing *the indispensable truth*, and which he supplied to the person of the Lord Jesus in revelation of the covenant. But from the days of John till now, the kingdom of the heavens suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. This period, which belongs to that subsequent to the exaltation of Christ, was proleptically visible. The Father, gathering all into Christ, as reconciling all to himself, and pouring out of his Spirit upon all flesh, was, from John to the crucifixion—yea, to the departure of the Lord—proleptically revealed visibly, and attested by the words and works of Jesus and his forerunner. Many heard Jesus gladly, called him the Son of David, and followed him, *strangers to the cross of Christ* ; they followed the Lord into the kingdom with that which was visible. We often hear of a visible and an invisible Church. Is the Church of God both ? We have answered this in page 280 ; yet we would further say, the grace of God, which bringeth salvation *to all men*, is manifested. (Titus ii. 11.) The whole world, though redeemed and blessed, as the Israelites in the wilderness, is the Church, and so is called to obey ; for God is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe. They, then, who obey, obey the grace of God ; and so are, according to it, crucified to the world—have *put off the old Adam nature*, and

walk in, and are sealed and led by the Spirit—the last Adam, the new man, created after God, in righteousness and holiness of the truth. This is the true Church, the body of Christ, and so an invisible Church. But so long as men claim to be of the Church of God, and walk as men, as carnal (1 Cor. iii. 4), as being made perfect in the flesh (Gal. iii. 3), as keeping down the truth in unrighteousness (Rom. i. 18), and not presenting their body a holy and living sacrifice (xii. 1), as not first trusting in Christ, that they may be sealed with the Spirit, according to the purpose of God, holy, and without blame, before him in love (Eph. i. 4, 12, 13), and so not having the mind that was in *Christ Jesus* (Phil. ii. 5), yet coming as God's people into the house of God (Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32), and claiming the sacraments, the kingdom of the heavens doth suffer violence, and the violent *take it by force*. The Lord Jesus, doubtless, has prominently before his mind the family of the patriarchs, and shows how the true Church is distinct from what was outward and visible, as Dinah is distinct from the twelve sons of Jacob. In a threefold question, he would lead them to consider the leading principle of the truth in Christ. He takes them back to the early history of their race, and from it we may clearly understand how the Lord uses it in teaching the truth, and what the truth is. There was but one daughter of Abraham, *the father of the faithful*, and she was Dinah. The patriarchs represented the Persons of the Trinity respectively. Dinah is the daughter of Abraham, but begotten by Jacob, the third of the patriarchs, even as the true Church of God is begotten of the Holy Ghost. She is the daughter of Zion; the daughter of Jerusalem, fair and beautiful; but she is defiled by the *uncircumcised*. Now, into the kingdom of the heavens—the full blessing of a Triune God, which constitutes the true Church—none should enter but through Christ; that is, in crucifying the flesh—all that is visible, *in the circumcision of the heart*, a circumcision not made with hands. From John to the end of the Lord's ministry, the kingdom was proleptically and visibly revealed. Established among men, they entered it; they ravished the daughter of Zion, the fair and beautiful, the joy of the whole earth; she suffered violence, and the violent took her by force, and the end will be to them that of the Shechemite. Thus, the Lord himself suffers, since Christ formed within is the

Church, the very body, of which all are members. (John xv. 5, 6.) Then to ignore *the circumcision of the heart in Christ* is to defile the temple of God, which temple is holy, a fit tabernacle for the indwelling Spirit. But it does suffer violence, and the violent take it by force. The trumpet gives an uncertain sound; the Word is supplanted by the traditions of men; and a refined Christianity which objects to the reading of such passages to which the Lord here evidently refers, as "offending the instinct of taste and decency," is only a harlot.

13. The kingdom is at hand, is established, and the obligation is upon all to repent, *else folly is wrought in Israel*. Until John, the kingdom was not so fully revealed, but now he *visibly* attested it in being superior to all that was of the earth, earthly. He was thus the Elias, that was for to come. The true Elias is the Christ. The Baptist fulfilling that side of the truth in the Lord Jesus, who is our Exemplar, was in all the power of the true Elias, and so was Elias. But this, with him, had an end when the Lord Jesus went forth filled with the Holy Ghost. So, then, *whosoever is in the kingdom* is greater than the Baptist, for he has the Spirit of Christ.

That every man should receive the truth, and obey it, is unquestionable from the Lord's words, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. As the ear is for hearing, so truly is the kingdom for man; as in creation it was said, Have dominion, and replenish the earth, so attest the everlasting Paternity of God.

16. The Lord Jesus, in his preface, intimated that every word was weighty: as he says, Whereunto shall I liken this generation? Into the simile he introduces he would gather all that goes before. Painfully puerile are the various interpretations of this most instructive teaching of the Lord. Generation signifies a condition rather than a period of time. The kingdom, in its nature, ignores time. In the figurative language he uses, he places all, including himself and the Baptist, in one category. All are children of one Father. All are sitting in the market place—slaves for sale. Some have felt the terrible bondage, have mourned, and these know the blessing of being manumitted, and have rejoiced. Others know not these things—a Father, and that all men are children, fallen from adoption to slavery, in the bondage of sin, yet in the Father's love redeemed, restored, and blessed.

Yea, they have hardened their hearts against them, for the former have piped to them, and they have not danced; have mourned, but they have not lamented.

18. The Lord now explains the mourning and the rejoicing. John came fasting, witnessing to the renunciation of the flesh, a death to sin, a putting off of the body, and so of casting out the devil, that he might possess the Spirit without measure—so attesting the truth for all men; but ye say, “He hath a devil.”

19. The Son of man came eating and drinking, witnessing to the feast of God, and a partaking of it. The feast of God is the fulness of God. Filled with the Spirit without measure, he witnessed to the gift of God for all men.

Ignorant of the truth to which the Baptist testified, satisfied with their own ideas of holiness, therefore not discerning the spiritual truth to which the Lord witnessed, they, from their own ground, said of the true Son of God, Behold a man; a gluttonous and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. In the Baptist, and in the Lord, holiness and righteousness were revealed. Both are in Christ Jesus, by whom we are in filial relation to God; but the multitudes rejected him. (Zech. vii. 5—12.) Let these truths be enforced, and the reply will be, “Who, then, can be saved?” or, “It is the raving of an enthusiast;” or, “The mistaken zeal of a bigot.” But Wisdom is justified of her children. They account her righteous—that Jehovah is righteous in all his works, and holy in all his ways. True wisdom, which is from above, is *first* pure, and then peaceable. It is the knowledge of a Triune God in covenant relation with man; and so of that also which comes short of the glory of God.

21. In love the Lord upbraided those cities in which he had given marvellous testimony *of his presence*, because they had not repented. Will these cities, then, be judged according to the principles of the kingdom, or their exceptional circumstances? Men will be judged in righteousness by Christ Jesus—so in the full revelation of those principles to which all nature is ever and everywhere testifying. Then, how could it be said of Tyre and Sidon, and of Sodom, if they had been otherwise circumstanced, the former would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes, and the other would have remained to this day? And how could

it be said that it will be more tolerable in the day of judgment for these cities than for those upon which the Lord pronounced the woe? Has God any pleasure in the destroying of a city? Then why were they destroyed, since they might have remained had they the privileges others possessed? Here is no incongruity, for whatever be the visitation, it is not the day of judgment. And what may be said of cities, may also be said of men.

The distinction must be drawn between the visible and the invisible. God is ever teaching, by outward things, invisible truth. And where there is a disposition for the invisible, circumstances may greatly promote its growth; but it too often happens that there is no such disposition, and circumstances enhance the condemnation, especially where privileges abound in wealth, position, and education.

In the destruction of Tyre, the truth was conveyed, as in that of Egypt, how that God will pollute the pride of all earthly glory, and bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth. Tyre is not guilty of gross vices; no, in her was all the glory of the earth. She was the mart of nations, the crowning city of the world; her merchants were princes, and her traffickers the honourable of the earth. In her, civilization, learning, and science flourished. She had everything to perfect her in earthly beauty—in the glory of her merchandise, the might of her arms, and the power of her wisdom. She was the song of nations; but her heart was lifted up, and in her pride she boasted that she was God, sitting in the seat of God—perhaps administering justice and equity against immorality and vice. Yet she is only “a man, and not God,” and will be such in the hand of him who will humble her. By her wisdom, and by her traffic, she has increased her riches, and her heart is lifted up; and because of these riches, and because she has set her heart as the heart of God, she must be brought down. She might have learned from Judah the truth, but she commits fornication with all the kings of the earth. She plays false to the one true King. For seventy years, as it was with Jerusalem, she is not to be remembered. However, God *will visit* her then; her hire and her merchandise shall be holiness unto the Lord, for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to *eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing*. In her will be those who will testify to Jehovah. But of her it may be said, She is to be humbled under

the mighty hand of God. Thus, visibly, God is teaching what he is doing with men.

Chorazin and Bethsaida, as Capernaum, had been honoured with the *visible presence* of the Lord and his forerunner—even as the second temple was more glorious than the first, though it lacked the *Shekinah*, because it had within it the visible presence of the Son of God, who manifested forth his glory. They had, then, a teaching they could not mistake, works they could not ignore, revealing the truth in all its intensity and distinctness, and which, had they considered, would have led them to obey the truth itself. Nothing stands out so antagonistic to the simple truth as religious prejudices: men's creeds being founded *on their own practices and opinions*. Had Tyre, the oppressed daughter, the truths she was to reveal to all nations, as they were in the cities—in Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, by the presence of the Lord and his forerunner—she would have repented long ago, and her repentance would be according to the truth, as expressed, in sackcloth and ashes. So she would have polluted all her glory, poured contempt upon all the honourable of the earth—she would have borne the cross. Hence, it will be more tolerable for those cities than for Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, which were guilty of spiritual enormities, corresponding to those fleshly sins, even pride and repudiation of the Paternity.

Let us bear in mind that the day of judgment will not be one day before that which the Father wills. These historical facts, while they would teach us not to say, "Tyre and Sidon, or even Egypt, suffered such things, because they had sinned above all other nations," set forth eternal verities, which are thus stereotyped on the page of history. Our experience here must not be confounded with our condition hereafter. God, as a Father, so orders all things, that in creation, providence, and grace, there may be a perfect unison of purpose. He teaches his children, and helps them, without annihilating their adoption, which he would do were he to make them mere machines. And when they are heavily afflicted, so far from its diminishing their sufferings hereafter, they will, in their failing to profit by them, tend adversely. All will have to stand before the judgment-seat of God, before him whom God hath ordained, and he will judge in righteousness. So that every man, whether an inhabitant of

Sodom, or Jerusalem, or Tyre, or Sidon, or Pharoah and his hosts, will be judged independently of outward circumstances—that is, it will matter not whether it was a life of adversity or prosperity, if the heart be right. Jesus and his forerunner were in these cities, even as Christ, the Son of God, is within every man; and however abominable may have been the past, if, now, he will only learn these truths, understand the words and works of Jesus, he will repent, and so make effective the grace of God within him.

Thrice has the Lord Jesus spoken of his *mighty works*. All men are redeemed by his mighty works. All men, therefore, have the presence of Christ and his Spirit, so that they may repent, if they will. Tyre is lifted up with pride, which is sin assailing the throne of the Most High. Sodom represents it mocking the Paternity. These set forth the nature of man in his relation to God. Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, distinctly witness to redemption, even what man is through redemption. Though sin may lift itself up against all that is of the Father, Christ has cast down all that would exalt itself against the knowledge of him. So, then, if we know sin, we lament and mourn; but if we know our deliverance, we shall pipe and dance with joy. But these cities *with Christ* knew not sin, and therefore understood not redemption. They, being clothed with the garment of light, and bound up with their prejudices, increase their condemnation, and hasten on the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

25. "At that time." We cannot regard these words as indicating the connexion, for if we look for it in words we take a deceptive way. The connexion is in the inner truth, which we have sufficiently shown to be continuous. While denouncing those cities wherein he had revealed his power, because they had not repented, he testifies to the nature and catholicity of the truth, saying, I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth. He stands on no narrow and exclusive ground, but contemplates the Paternity as co-extensive with his dominion; for he hath gathered all things into one, even Christ; both which are in heaven and in earth, even in him; and he is the Father, of whom the whole family in heaven and in earth is named—who has not surrendered his great name, nor given up either heaven or earth, but is Lord of all? For he says, Thou hast hid these things

from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. I will confess to thee. I, Christ the Son of God, am in myself the very correlative of the Father, in his covenant relation, and with all flesh. I am the true idea of "babes." In me is included the predestination, before the beginning, of all men to the place of sons, to be holy and without blame in love; in whom also we have redemption and remission of sins—redemption in Christ from sin, and in his blood, that is his life, remission of sins. So, according to the riches of his grace, we first trust in Christ, and then are sealed with the Spirit of promise. This is the *εὐδοκία*, the good pleasure of the Father, to which the Lord here, and the Apostle in Eph. i. 5, 9, testify. This, then, cannot be in anything of the created nature. However vast be the scope of human wisdom, however perfect its prudential morality, it *cannot confess the Father*. Every one readily admits the advantages of profound learning, scientific knowledge, and chaste erudition, and even of an upright moral character, but they are qualities which belong only to that nature which is born of woman. Let that nature be cultivated to its highest attainment, let every faculty be energized and fully developed;—what then? All must be crucified, the glory of man must be polluted. It matters not, so far as concerns the kingdom, what a man's learning, or what his social morality may be. If he take either or both of these grounds, he will not know the Father. He is not one of Wisdom's children. He is not even a babe—the least in the kingdom of the heavens.

What would be the fact if these things were revealed to the wise and prudent—that is, to know the Father and to reveal him? Not only would it be to take an exclusive ground, to pass by the ignorant, and them that were out of the way, and so strike at the Paternity, for he is no father who hates his own offspring, but it would exalt that nature which is not subject to the law of God, neither can be. The carnal mind never yields to the holy love of the divine nature, for as the Lord exhibited it, the wise and the prudent resisted, even as it is the law of that nature, and in every man, to resist *the operating principle of the divine life*, as he finds within himself the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, for they are contrary.

27. The Lord, having vindicated the truth as in himself, now adds, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father." He

created all things, for him they were created, in him they consist, being gathered into him. To possess him is to possess all things. He was constituted heir from the beginning, and in him we are co-heirs of God. With him we possess predestination, election, righteousness, glorification. Whatever doctrine, then, men may propound of the everlasting Sonship, he takes us upon a far higher platform ; we are brought into an actual relation with God, which is far above all theories. No man knoweth the Son but the Father ; and no man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever he shall reveal him. No *created* power can ascend this untrodden height. This belongs not to that which is born of woman. As the Apostle says : "The things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God, and the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." Possessing, then, the Spirit, we know the Father and we reveal him, for he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ hath both the Father and the Son.

28. To Christ the Son of God all are delivered. He is the revealer of the Father. It is, therefore, the duty of every man to make effective the grace of God. Whom, then, does the Lord here invite to come unto him ? Not, indeed, the wise and prudent, as such, but the slaves of sin, sitting in the market-place—those who are burdened with the flesh, and heavy laden with sin and accumulated guilt. He invites, therefore all men.

29. What, then, is the distinctive teaching of Jesus, which here concentrates itself ? *and which we unhesitatingly say is not followed.* He has pronounced woes upon abused privileges. In the simple order of his teaching, as if in the very nature of things, there is a climax ; he first sets before us the lusts of the flesh,—pride exalting itself, and then exhibiting itself in the most debasing of practices ; secondly, the lust of the eyes in spiritual enormities, corresponding to those of the flesh ; for where spiritual pride is, there is the old Adam, and so a lacking of a proper receptivity, which is Christ, for the incorruptible seed of life. Christ formed within *is the only vessel* in which dwells the fulness of God. We are all members of one body, and that body is Christ. Christ having died for all, all should be dead to sin, and so present a pure, clean, holy receptivity for the Son of God ; for we are become dead by the body of Christ, that possessing him we should be married to him that rose from the dead, even the Son

of God, and bring forth fruit unto God. The Apostle Paul lived Christ. He, therefore, knew no man after the flesh. And when he was about to depart, he thought not of his present body, but desired a building eternal in the heavens—even membership of the body of the glory of Christ. (2 Cor. v. 1, 4 : 1 John iii. 1, 2.) And thirdly, he declares that these things are hid from the wise and prudent—which is the pride of life. So, then, no amount of mental acquirement or ability, no social spirit, however refined by the ablest codes of civilization, can know these things.

Jesus contemplates the whole world in the past, present, and future : in the cities of Tyre and Sidon and Sodom, the lust of the flesh ; in Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, the lust of the eyes ; and in the great cities of civilization, that which shall mark their distinguishing features as such, and for which all are now striving, human knowledge, the pride of life. All the efforts of man in the exaltation and disciplining of a fallen and depraved nature, are but labour in vain. Instead of their meeting a deep want, the terrible sense of need and anxiety increases upon what it feeds. And all the multiplied substitutes for the one thing needful, the doctrine, the traditions and performances of men for that which is ever in the forefront of the teaching of Jesus, are in their effect fraught with the greatest mischief. Men are heavy laden, and they get no relief. Our great advantages increase our condemnation ; and if it will be more tolerable in the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for those cities wherein the mighty works of Christ were done, what will be our condemnation, professing in our wisdom and in our prudence to recognise and acknowledge those works, yet practically denying them ? While the Lord thus un-masks the condition of all men, and shows how they have not obeyed the covenant of God, he sets before us a very important truth, which only could be taught by his presence and his works, as representing the mode of that presence in the cities where he and his disciples dwelt. It is this, that the grace of God is with every man, *that it is according to Christ the Son of God*, and that it is for man to obey it, to make it effective, else he resists it.

Then, what is man to do ? He is to know the Father and reveal him. But how ? Not, indeed, by believing in a forensic righteousness or religious asceticism, for no work *of the flesh*, in whatever form, will avail. It is simply, "Take my yoke upon

you, and learn of me." The yoke lies at the forefront of the whole teaching of the Lord. This yoke is the cross of Christ. We destroy every yoke with the yoke of Christ—Christ crucified within us; *whom we put on*, and by whom we are crucified to the world, and the world to us. We are to make effective what we already possess. So, then, our first act is *not of the flesh*, but of Christ in us—the crucifying of all that is of man and the glory of man. The flesh can do nothing, cannot think a good thought. When we carry the yoke of Christ we can then learn of the Son, and we learn the Father of glory, we know the blessed relation and all it implies. Jesus says, I am meek and lowly of heart. He is meek, since it is not his will, but the Father's; he is humble and lowly of heart, because he has been made sin and put it away. And this he now is. Not, then, because of his compassions, but because of the covenant, according to which is the law of creation and redemption, should we take his yoke and learn of him, so we find rest for our souls, we seek and find God. We know no peace but as the result of the holy love of God working in us. All else is labour and no rest.

30. His yoke is easy. How easy? His burden is light. How light? It is not an easy yoke if we begin where the teaching of the day would instruct us, "Leave off what is wrong; supply what is right." In other words, "patch the old garment;" or, "begin with your habits and practices," instead of directing us to go at once to the root of the matter, and, like David, *destroy every enemy*. We must be crucified to all, and all to us. Christ must be all and in all. Then the yoke is easy and the burden is light. What is this burden?—not, indeed, the law of sin and death, but *the law* of the Spirit of life. It is love, holy and never-failing love, as the great *law* of life.

All nature has its laws, operating principles. In everything there is a law or principle of nature. It is its burden. It is inseparable from its very being. It is, therefore, a light burden. What, then, should be the burden of man but that of the Son of God? Since the Father is revealed, holy love is the law of our true being; and it is, therefore, a light burden. It is the glory of the Father that this should be the inheritance of every one in Christ. But all men come short of it, and why? They impose their own yoke, and will not take the yoke of Christ.

CHAPTER XII.

- 1 AT that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his
disciples were an hungered, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat.
2 But when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples
do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day.
3 But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was
4 an hungered, and they that were with him; how he entered into the house
of God, and did eat the showbread, which was not lawful for him to eat,
5 neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? Or have
ye not read in the Law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the
6 temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless? But I say unto you, That
7 in this place is *one* greater than the temple. But if ye had known what
this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have con-
8 demned the guiltless. For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.
9 AND when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue: and,
10 behold, there was a man which had *his* hand withered. And they asked
him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might
11 accuse him. And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you,
that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will
12 he not lay hold on it, and lift *it* out? How much then is a man better
13 than a sheep! Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days. Then
saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* forth;
14 and it was restored whole, like as the other. Then the Pharisees went out,
and held a council against him, how they might destroy him.
15 But when Jesus knew *it*, he withdrew himself from thence. And great
16 multitudes followed him, and he healed them all; and charged them that
17 they should not make him known: that it might be fulfilled which was
18 spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Behold my servant, whom I have
chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my Spirit
19 upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive,
20 nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised
reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send
21 forth judgment unto victory. And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.
22 Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb:
and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.
23 And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?

24 But when the Pharisees heard *it*, they said, This *fellow* doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.

25 And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house
26 divided against itself shall not stand: and if Satan cast out Satan, he is
27 divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast *them* out? there-
28 fore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of
29 God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind
30 the strong man? and then he will spoil his house. He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.
31 Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy *against* the *Holy* Ghost shall not be
32 forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the
33 *world* to come. Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by *his*
34 fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an
36 evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account
37 thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

38 Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no
40 sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man
41 be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater
42 than Jonas *is* here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here.

43 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry
44 places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it
45 empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

46 While he yet talked to the people, behold, *his* mother and his brethren

47 stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him
Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with
48 thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mo-
49 ther? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward
50 his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whoso-
ever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my
brother, and sister, and mother.

1. THE covenant is to reveal the Father through Christ (Eph. i. 3, 10, 12): in whom—Christ, we have an inheritance—our adoption in the Son. (Col. i. 13—19.) Christ, then, is the body, the proper receptivity for the Son of God in us. (Rom. vii. 4.) When Christ is formed in us, we are united to the Son, for the divine life can be revealed only in and through Christ (John i. 11, 12); even as, in and through the woman, is revealed the offspring of him who is her head. (1 Cor. xi. 3: Rom. vii. 2.) God, then, has, according to his purpose, gathered all into Christ, that Christ may be all and in all; so, we are all members *of one body*, and this body is the receptivity for the divine life. Hence, without Christ we can do nothing. With Christ we are a holy temple for the indwelling Spirit of God. How, then, shall we defile this temple? Rather, when we find our great adversary—sin—reviving within us, we must turn to Christ in us, and overcome as he overcame (Exod. xv. 1, &c.): and so are more than conquerors through him that loved us. The Lord, therefore, bids us take his yoke. It is within the power of all to do so, since he is in all, taught by his visible presence in certain cities, wherein he did *his mighty works*, that all that is *of man* may come to nought.

The Lord Jesus now takes the multitudes on their own ground. In his coming he broke down the middle wall of partition, so that greater privileges belong now to the whole world than did at his time to the Jews, and the world would now be his audience. It will be when he comes the second time, and then great will be the woe. All the miracles and works of Jesus are signs of corresponding spiritual truths, and so are as parables in their teaching.

The Sabbath was instituted an everlasting sign of the covenant, of the glory of the Father, the true rest of man. Had the Jews the reality—the substance, it would have cast its shadow in the

Sabbath; but since, in truth, they had it not, the shadow is forced upon them from without; when they made it the centre of their sacrificial system, and in its observance and the multiplying of religious rites, they thought they would be the more acceptable to God. One fast was ordained in the law, but the Jews multiplied fasts. Two sacraments were ordained by Christ, but the Church of Rome multiplies them. And we, while denouncing these and other practices of that Church, resort to the most absurd, meretricious acts, worshipping God in the old Adam nature, instead of in Spirit and in truth. To enrobe the carnal man in a sanctimonious garb, is more abominable than sin in its naked deformity, even as Capernaum was worse than Sodom. And now, what is the distinguishing feature of the whole civilized world, but the development of Antichrist? However, the Lord's teaching concerning the Sabbath is applicable to much that is now patent with us; for with mental progress is the lust of the eyes—much religion in a visible form—and the lust of the flesh in the most refined indulgences.

How, then, do we understand the Sabbath? It will not be sufficient to say, "It is a relic of Judaism," for we take that ground, and on it follow the Lord's teaching for all time.

Its etymology is rest; but it is a sign of a true rest now, which results only from the knowledge of the Father, in doing his will in the exercise of a holy love. But here an important truth is overlooked: we must take the yoke before we can find rest for our souls; we *must cease from labour*, as God ceased from *all* his works and entered into rest—into his glory. (Heb. iv. 4.)

The ground is cursed for man's sake, that he should not trust in it; and that he should subdue it, that it may bring forth fruit; further, that he should toil for six days, then put them off—in other words, put off that which is accursed and enter into that which constitutes his true rest. Seven is the covenant number, including all the blessings of the covenant. Six "is the number of a man," who comes short of the covenant—short of the glory of God. He is, therefore, to *cease from* the six and enter into the seven.

Let us now, with an enlightened Christian Jew, understand the meaning of the Sabbath.

It was instituted at creation. It came in with the cessation of

creation, yet man fell before it came. This must be evident to a thoughtful mind; for in the day that God created man, male and female created he them, with the blessing to be fruitful, to multiply and replenish the earth. In all the purity of an untainted nature, as they came forth from the hand of their Maker, this command would be obeyed as the first and great witness to the Father. On creation's morn, the sons of God sang together. Angels and man were thus one in their hymn of praise. Both were holy. But sin invading the sanctity of that state, man fell. But in Christ Jesus all things are restored, and so things on earth and things in heaven are reconciled.

It would appear that, before the blessing was consummated, our first parents must have fallen; for it is written "in Adam all men died"—being then in his loins, created in him. In the very day they were created they died. *The death of all then took place.* The first conception was a tainted one, and the issue was a murderer, and not the child of a pure and untainted nature. All men are conceived in sin. To object to this, because of the impossibility of Adam becoming suddenly corrupt, would argue an ignorance of the nature of sin. We must not confound degrees of sin with sin itself. Man, by one single act, admits sin, and he is *de facto* dead to God. So now, in redemption, when sin revives, which it does when the carnal mind acts, it separates us from the one centre of life and blessedness.

The record of the Sabbath coming in before that of the fall, is no argument against what is asserted of it. It was important that the seven days, in their consecutive order, should be uninterruptedly set forth as indicating a cycle of time, which is ever recurring, and will continue to the end of all things, and so is a witness to a covenant God and Father in Christ Jesus.

It embraced man, immediately upon his fall, with a provision meet for his deepest need. Before the fall he had the tree of life; after it, the Sabbath ever pointing to that tree, which he could attain to only by the putting away of all that was accursed of God.

In the strictness, and by the awful sanctions, with which the observance of the Sabbath was enforced, there is the removal of everything that would derogate from it as a rest. It is also a sign for all time, even as the rainbow with its seven prismatic

colours is for all flesh. And after the Father had commanded the same blessing, when, the world being redeemed, cleansed from the flesh, they went forth replenishing the earth, witnessing to the everlasting covenant made with all flesh, circumcision then became its sign—a sign to the patriarchs, who witnessed to the Triune God *that they had put off the flesh*. And when the full purpose of God was revealed, then baptism *into the death of Christ* was accompanied with the words of the full blessing of God, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The Sabbath will continue as a sign till the six thousand years of toil shall cease, when there will be an eternal rest. And the rainbow will endure, encircling the throne of God. And the true circumcision will be in the putting away of everything that offendeth or maketh a lie, and then shall we partake of the tree of life in the paradise of God. For where Christ is all and in all, there God is all and in all.

Nothing so truly testifies to the meaning of the Sabbath as the sons of toil, labouring their six days' labour, ceasing from it and taking their rest. All nature claims it, and is a far higher witness than a cold, rigid formalism. However, when we have the substance, the shadow will follow.

Some, not perceiving the object of the two forms of the fourth commandment in the decalogue, question the authenticity of it. Others, endeavouring to reconcile the discrepancy, would expunge the latter portions of both as glosses. The two forms attest the eternal principles of the covenant, thus:—shortly after the exodus they were to remember the Sabbath, because God had rested on that day from all his work. They knew that Jehovah had wrought for them, for his great name's sake. Their *redemption was present* as a fact, therefore were they to remember the Sabbath day—their *rest in God*. And when that generation was put away, it was necessary to give the law a second time; and as they were about to enter into their rest after forty years' journeyings, *which rest was present to them*, they were reminded of *their redemption*; so, the two forms of the fourth commandment bring out distinctly the two correlative principles of the covenant.

After the rejection by Jehovah of the carnal religion offered by the Jews, and the express demand that every yoke be broken, that the oppressed go free, who are they that he commends as

delighting in his Sabbath (Is. lviii.), but they who *cease from their own ways*, who find not *their own* pleasure, who speak not *their own* words, on that day.

If, then, we understand in anywise the meaning of the Sabbath as an everlasting sign of the covenant, then it teaches the necessity of obeying that of which it is the sign; namely, to take the yoke of Christ and enter into rest.

At that time, the most fitting, the most expressive, the Lord, with his disciples, passed through the corn, and the disciples being hungry began to pluck the corn and to eat. We say the time was most fitting, for what is the picture? No man can be a disciple of Jesus except he carry his cross, therefore the name "disciple" applied to those who come to Jesus and learn of him implies that they have taken his yoke—they hunger, they have fasted—yea, *his presence with them* signifies it, that they are one with Christ, therefore do they partake of the abundant blessing of God. The corn with its golden tints and bounteous plenty sates the eye and makes the heart heave with joy—a grateful witness to the overflowing blessings of God. The harvest is plenteous, and these men, as disciples, having taken the yoke, are appropriating to themselves the blessings of eternal life ere they enter as labourers. The Pharisees murmur, saying, "Thy disciples do that which is not lawful on the Sabbath day." They know not Christ; they therefore could not see to the end of that which was abolished in him, much less, that the whole law pointed to the eternal truths of the covenant. As they failed in convincing the Lord of wrong-doing, in not fasting after their manner, they think they will now condemn his disciples by the express letter of the law.

The ground on which the Pharisees challenged the conduct of the Lord's disciples was that of holiness. They knew neither holiness nor righteousness. However, the Lord does not leave them in ignorance. He renders not railing for railing, but a blessing. He takes them to the written word, which they may understand if they will, but they close their ears, holding fast to their prejudices.

3. Have you not read what David did when he was a hungered and they that were with him? This incident finds its antitype in the Lord and his disciples. David had slain his enemies, had

overcome Goliath, and therefore put forth his hand and partook of the hallowed provision which, according to the number of the cakes, is for all who so come. So was it with them who were with David; they had kept themselves pure, their vessels being holy according to the covenant, they had kept themselves from the flesh *for three days*. (1 Sam. xxi. 5.) "Can you not understand the simple teaching of your Scriptures? If you cannot, then how can you understand what I am doing? You appeal to the written word, and object on the ground of holiness." Their holiness is without Christ. "Do you not know *how that David entered the house of God*, the holy place, and partook of hallowed bread, which was not lawful for him to do, neither for them with him, but only for the priests?"

5. The Lord adheres to the covenant. The truth is sufficient for all errors. He first takes David and then goes back to the priests. When we are according to the covenant, we are in Christ the Son of God, so kings and priests unto God,—we overcome as Christ overcame, and we are the channel of blessing to others. Have you not read in the Law how that the priests in the temple, on the Sabbath days, profane the Sabbath and are blameless? The priests offered their daily offering, which, in its twofold nature, had respect to the two principles of the covenant. Then on the Sabbath, which implied the preceding condition of putting away labour by the yoke of Christ in order to enter into rest, the offering was doubled, thereby intensifying the truth. And although, according to their view they profaned the Sabbath, yet they were truly honouring it. Thus, the great Teacher of Israel, adhering to the covenant, despite the contradiction of sinners *against himself*, enforces what is. The covenant is Christ Jesus in us. So, then, not in our body as the old Adam, but in the body of Christ as the last Adam, in whom we all are gathered, in it, as a holy vessel, is the divine life generated, and so are we sons of God. If, then, we have not first trusted in Christ, we are not sealed with the Spirit. If we reject Christ we are spiritual suicides, we tread under foot the Son of God, and do despite to the Spirit of grace.

6. The Lord Jesus has referred to the temple with its priests and offerings; but there is here one greater than the temple. If they understand not the meaning of these shadows of good

things to come, how shall they the good things themselves, the substance which gave them existence? He is greater than the temple (*ἱερός*, the outer court). He is the true altar, the true burnt offering; and so he is the holy place and the veil by whom we enter into the holiest of all, where by his blood, as the life, we stand accepted before God.

8. The prominent idea of the yoke which they are to take, he now teaches and enforces by the prophet. If ye had known what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice. The outward commandments of the law were not for the carnal nature, so as to render sacrifices to God, but pointed to the holy principles of the covenant as revealed in Christ Jesus—to that one faith which has been demonstrated throughout all time—so that those principles might continue to be demonstrated. Come, says the prophet (Hos. vi.), let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn and he will heal us. He hath smitten and he will bind us up. *After two days* will he revive us, in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight; then shall we know, if we follow on to know, the Lord. The judgment of God here referred to, and in this chapter mentioned, is mercy. It redeems man from that nature which cannot inherit the promises, whatever be the sacrifices offered. The judgment of God was in order that they might follow on to know the Father. How true is the whole of that chapter of the human heart despite the grace of God!

We repeat it, since the mind of man *is now instructed short of the truth*, that the mercy of God is not in pardoning sin, but in delivering from sin, that we may know the Father. Now, every returning Sabbath teaches, and confirms to us, that mercy is ever manifested, and that the Father is revealing himself as our true rest. Therefore is the Son of man Lord also of the Sabbath day. He is greater than the temple (*ἱερός*), because he is the Christ. He is Lord also of the Sabbath day because he is the Son of God who gives rest, for this is the record: God have given to us eternal life, and this life is in the Son; he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. So Son of man implies the covenant in all its fulness. He is come that all men may possess it. (Eph. i. 2.)

9. It is of no moment that Matthew does not mention the

places where these things occurred. And it may here be stated, once for all, that speculative theories respecting the chronology, locality, or history of facts, however valuable, are not the interpretation of the Word of God. They may be useful, as were the labours of the Massorites in preserving the sacred text inviolate, but they are not the revelation of the kingdom.

One very important principle of interpretation must never be lost sight of. There are two grounds ever running contrary—the human and the divine. We must, therefore, distinguish the parts, if any, which take the one and the other, in every incident or narrative.

Every word of the Lord must testify of, and be weighted with, the covenant. In meeting the wicked spirit of those around him, he draws attention to the king and priest; to the outer court of the temple and the Sabbath; to the law and the prophets, all which relatively witness to redemption and blessing. From the last pair he would instruct these men standing upon the sanctions of Holy Scripture to understand its true meaning. At no one moment can it be said that Jesus failed of his mission as a minister of the *circumcision* to confirm *the promises* made unto the fathers—words which, in their highest signification, may yet have application in respect of all men. How important, then, is it for those who are in his stead, ambassadors of God, to understand the Great Teacher of man and to follow his teaching!

10. He now enters their synagogue. He is now in the midst of men. In the synagogue was a man with a withered hand, the condition of them all; they had not taken the yoke of Christ; they, therefore, knew not the meaning of the Sabbath, of him being in the midst of them. Instead of understanding the law and the prophets, they are filled with their own conceits and the praise of men, and, therefore, cannot pick the ears of corn and eat. More, they ask him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days?" that they might accuse him. Religious prejudice not only thus determines to thwart the truth, but, developing itself, would rather hush it altogether than surrender one of the least of its conceits. They meet Sabbath after Sabbath and understand neither its import nor signification. They read the Word in their synagogues, but know it not, nor the power of God. There is

one here greater than the temple and Lord of the Sabbath, and yet he has not one to witness to his presence. They are all as the withered hand. They know not the right hand of the Lord. (Exod. xv. 6.) Yes, in the midst of their religious observances, on the Sabbath day, all testifying to him, the Christ the Son of God, and to whom the very words they read witnessed, he was there, who had redeemed and blessed them, the angel of the covenant; but they do not put forth their hand and appropriate it. The poor were there as sheep without a shepherd, for there was no prophet, no righteous man, no disciple. The Lord Jesus had failed to convince them by their Scriptures, he now speaks to them according to their practice; but he does not lose sight of the fact that they had taken upon themselves the shepherd's office, *never having entered by the door*. He asks what man is there that, if one sheep fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will not lay hold of it and pull it out? In the truest wisdom, the Lord takes that which will not only reveal the truth but lay open their baseness. As the Good Shepherd, he is come to deliver his sheep from the pit of destruction, that they who go forth in his name may follow his steps.

How much more, then, is a man better than a sheep? If you deliver the sheep on the Sabbath day, you, in a parable, attest what I am doing. In following the better instincts of our nature, we are on safer ground than in disregarding them; and if we would rightly use them we shall understand how they are laws planted within us, like the laws of nature, to teach higher and eternal truths. And so the Lord Jesus, however selfish be their motive, takes the act of these men, and, putting the best construction upon it, as if they were obeying the common instincts of humanity, argues that it *was* lawful to do good on the Sabbath day.

But where is the connexion in the mind of Jesus between the sheep in the pit and the one with the withered hand? All men, short of the glory of God, are in the pit, fast bound to the miry clay, and they have no power to deliver themselves. But the grace of God abounds to every man; and here the Lord teaches that although the withered hand expresses man's condition through the fall and his inability to help himself, yet the healing of it attests that Christ has laid hold of him and lifted him out of the pit.

So, then, being partaker of Christ, he puts forth the hand. So, taking the yoke, *he lays hold of* eternal life.

13. By reason of the covenant, of the mystery revealed, the word is to every man "Stretch forth thy hand." And he who obeys the word stretches it forth, and partakes accordingly, and he enters into a true rest of which the Sabbath is the sign.

The hand is restored whole as the other. These words, taken literally, are simple enough, but they have a spiritual import. If all men are as the withered hand, then the restoration, according to the other, is a restoration not only from evil, but to a power according to God in Christ. (Exod. xv. 6—13.) Then a man is better than a sheep.

14. A soul wrested from the bondage of sin, a brand snatched from the burning, arouses the ferocious malignity of Satan. Then the Pharisees went out, and took council together to destroy him who was the very hope of Israel. Is it possible to conceive a blindness and fanaticism so fearful as this? However desperately wicked, yea, however deceitful be the heart of man, the remedy is the yoke of Christ. It respects no man, nor the glory of the world, the honourable of the earth, the self-complacent, high or low, broad or narrow, party or sect. However, men talk as if they would endorse all that is good and pious; and then, with all rancorous bitterness and party zeal, contend for outward things, which they call non-essentials. If they are such, why should they exist when the cross levels all? What is of God cannot be non-essential. Let men lay aside their prejudices, conceits, predilections, in a practical knowledge of Christ, and they will have found the remedy for all spiritual ills.

15. The Lord withdrew himself. Israel slideth back as a back-sliding heifer. Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone. (Hos. iv. 16, 17.) What a painful picture is here of the human heart despising the blessing of divine grace. The covenant, in all the fulness of its blessings, is with him. He rejects it, and, unrestrained, lusts for the flesh, and so is left alone by God. Nevertheless, Jesus heals the multitudes who attest the universality of the truth; while those professing to be wise and prudent, to be holy and righteous, yet ignorant of themselves, reject their salvation. The law of Christ, and the law of the Spirit of life—that is, *mercy and—love* are the operating principles of Wisdom's children.

16. The prohibition particularly respects the Christ—the true King, who is come to bring forth judgment into victory. He is come to *perfect* judgment, not only to cast out sin and deliver man, but also to bless with the Spirit of the Father. (Is. xlii. 1, 2, 3.) And this for the whole world. He wars not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places: therefore, he is no earthly king, nor is his voice to be heard in the street. In the prohibition to make him known, he would lead them to know him as the true King, enthroned on their hearts, and as their true rest in the Son revealing the Father.

18. He is the servant as the Christ: the beloved as the Son. A bruised reed he does not break; smoking flax he does not quench. The former being without water, dries, and is crushed with its own burden: a true picture of one burdened and heavy laden with sin. The latter, being without oil, is expiring, emitting a disagreeable odour; such is one possessing mortal life, yet destitute of everlasting life. Then, what does he? As the Christ, he exercises judgment, and so cleanses from sin. As the Son, he bestows of his Spirit the unction from above, and the soul revives. He restores the soul for his great name's sake. Thus, he brings forth judgment into victory—a covenant for the people, a light to the Gentiles.

21. And so in his name—as the Christ, the Son of God—shall the Gentiles trust.

22. Then was brought unto him one who was, indeed, burdened and heavy laden—a bruised reed and smoking flax—possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb. He could not, indeed, “Behold the Servant of Jehovah,” the Beloved of the Father. He could not see the covenant of his God. He was simply one without it. And not knowing its power, he could not testify to it. Blinded by the god of this world, he could not receive the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and therefore could not testify to it. The Lord Jesus healing him, shows that there is no condition—for in him is the full *ενεργεια* of Satan—which the judgment of God does not meet. Being healed, he sees and speaks, and the people marvelled, saying, “Is not this the Son of David?”—the Christ.

24. Man's will is free to choose whom he will serve. His awful condemnation will be, not that Christ had not delivered him, but

that, despite his redemption, despite the testimony of the Word, he would work the works of the flesh.

No more than nature can, in all her glories and graces, music and mysteries, be set forth in a few sentences, can the kingdom of God be revealed in a scheme or system of religion. Even all the gorgeous and magnificent ritual of the temple, according to the divine mind, was but a faint outline, shadow of the true. If we apprehend the reality, we must see how that it is interwoven with the life of men, so that they are either in darkness or light, walking in the one or the other, expressive of their true condition.

While the Word of God reveals the truth, and the kingdom manifests itself in the visible presence of Christ, the Pharisees, in their fearful prejudices, close their eyes against it. We have already seen how Satan will admit the person of Jesus to be the Holy One, the Son of God, and desire not to be tormented before the time. So, we now see his slaves readily admit the kingdom of Satan, ruling in man, and enslaving him; also, that his power is weakened and overcome. But, like their master, they fear the cross, which brings to nought and lays in the dust all the glory of man: and they resist, declaring he casteth out devils in Beelzebul.

They know that his power was supernatural, and would readily receive him as a prophet from God, if he would only sanction a righteousness *of man*. But he came to open the blind eye, to unstop the deaf ear, to loose the dumb tongue, and to make man whole. And all this by the cross, which must be lifted up in the heart, that there may be a true receptivity—a vessel pure, yea, holy—for all the blessings of the divine nature, and so bring forth judgment into victory.

25. The Lord Jesus knew their thoughts. They were fighting against the testimony of their own conscience. They willingly continued under the thralldom of religious prejudice. He showed them that he read their thoughts, and thereby gave them evidence that he was more than man. Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation. This cannot be refuted; they see it in their own city, in their own houses, that every city or house divided against itself cannot stand. Two kingdoms exist, each claiming man's allegiance. Where the kingdom of Satan is, there is Satan. But if his kingdom rises up against itself, or he against himself, there is an end of both. However, the Lord follows on,

and presses home the unquestionable truth of his words. "If I," he says, "in Beelzebul cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? I send them forth publishing the kingdom of the heavens at hand, and they attest it, casting out devils. Ask them by what power? In what name? They will tell you, and hereafter will testify against you, that I have brought forth judgment into victory in the desolation of the kingdom of Satan, and the establishing of my own."

28. Let us not forget that, in refuting his adversaries, he is seeking to bring them to a better mind—that every word is powerful and quick, as it discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart. And, however desperately wicked and deceitful be their heart, they cannot go beyond the condition he has already met in the healing of the one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb. He enunciates the truth: "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, the kingdom of God is come unto you." The Spirit of God could not come in the plenitude of his power, in the fullness of his blessing, until Melchizedek was enthroned most high in the glory of God the Father. And then the Spirit, poured out upon all flesh, would witness to that kingdom established over all. Now, it is anticipated, it is proleptically revealed—not shadowed forth, but truly revealed; and so the presence of the Spirit signified that the prophecy was fulfilled, and that judgment was brought forth into victory.

29. He now testifies according to the evidence of their senses: How can one enter a strong man's house and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man, and then he will spoil his house? He bound the strong man when he, the Son of man, became sin, and was, as the serpent, lifted up—crucified—that we should believe into him and not perish. If, then, Christ be in us, the body is dead, because of sin. Righteousness, then, follows. We possess the Spirit of the Son: and so it is written, The Spirit is life, because of righteousness. And so our members, which have been instruments of sin unto iniquity, now become instruments of righteousness unto holiness. According to this was the kingdom revealed in the casting out of devils. The truth cannot accommodate itself to the fancies or practices of men. Nor can a man accommodate himself to both kingdoms, for he that is not with Christ is against him. And so he that does not gather,

scatters. There is no neutral ground ; the truth does not admit of one. How awful, then, is the responsibility resting upon every man. If he is not manifesting the truth *to every man's* conscience in the fear of God, and if he is not teaching the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, he is not only not gathering, but he is scattering those for whom Christ died.

31. Would that these words were understood, "He, who gathers not, scatters." The kingdom is established, and we gather into it or not. Jesus gave a visible manifestation of it when he, as our Exemplar, cast out devils by the Spirit of God. So long as he walked among men, they knew him after the flesh—they saw, they heard, they handled the Word of life, the Son of man, the covenant. And during such a revelation of the truth, all manner of sin against him would be forgiven. But the day was coming when he would be taken, and another would come—the Holy Spirit of God, *and he would be invisible*. They rejected the Son of man ; they sought to accuse him ; they took counsel to destroy him. Thus is exhibited the condition of not being one with the Son of man, of not gathering with him ; so, a condition from the nature of things. Then, when the Holy Spirit shall come, witnessing to the fulfilment of the grace of God, there will be no neutral ground. He will reveal Christ, the Son of God, in the heart, whom, not to obey, will be to commit the sin against which the Lord here warns us.

What, indeed, is it to reject the Holy Spirit of God ? It is to despise the riches of the glory of the Father's inheritance in his holy ones. According to his eternal purpose, he created us all as children to walk before him, holy, without blame—in love. All have fallen. Christ Jesus is come, and the Father has gathered all into him—hath raised us all in him, whom he has set at his own right hand, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. Such, then, is our calling, to realise him who is the elect of God, that possessing him effectively we possess those principles which are, according to the eternal purpose and predestinating love of the Father, that we should walk in them. Thus, we first trust in Christ, and then are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise as an earnest of our inheritance. And we are to make this calling and election sure,

for it is God who worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. The calling is the riches of the glory of the Father's inheritance in us. The election is Christ and the Spirit of the Son within us. To reject the Spirit, then, is to reject this, for the mystery is revealed. How grievous, then, is sin against the Holy Spirit, who in condescending love would seal us unto the day of redemption of the purchased possession, the peculiar treasure, all that the glorified mystical body of Christ can signify, for he is the head of the body—the Church, the fulness of him that filleth all and in all.

33. From the nature of things, a profession of Christianity, where the truth is not, is a sinning against the Holy Ghost. Therefore, the Lord says, Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. To attempt a middle path or neutral condition is impossible. But why does the Lord, having before stated that a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, here command both to be made good? It is true that a good tree will empty itself into fruit, and that according to its own character. But the Lord here teaches what the truth of God is—how that it embraces every man, and that it is within the power of every man to realise it, making it effective. Faith without works, and works without faith, are both an abomination to God; therefore Jesus says, If you do not make the tree good, and its fruit good, make it corrupt, and its fruit corrupt.

34. Who, then, shall say the Pharisees were not guilty of this sin? They were certainly in a condition opposed to the Spirit of God. They were a *generation* of vipers. Not only corrupt in themselves, but they, with a semblance of religious sanctity, infused the poison of death into the souls of men. How can they, being evil, speak good things? How can they testify out of their own hearts to Christ and the Spirit?

35. Jesus here speaks of a good man and of a good treasure. He has just spoken of a good tree and good fruit. A good tree possesses *Christ and the Spirit*, and gives fruit accordingly. The good man is one with Christ (chap. xiii. 8). The good treasure is the blessing of the indwelling Spirit. From the good treasure good things come forth—good, unaffected by evil. But an evil man is one who knows not Christ, who has not taken his yoke.

And so, whatever be his profession, he is filled with Satan, and out of this evil treasure brings forth accordingly.

Christ and the Spirit are as inseparable as the covenant of God ; so that a condition that sins against the one, sins against the other. The sin against Christ is seen in Ananias and Sapphira. They lied to the Holy Ghost. *Satan filled their hearts.* So they clave to the accursed thing, when by their outward act, while professing to have forsaken all, they showed that they were not crucified to all. A divided, uncrucified heart, whatever be the profession, is death. The sin against the Spirit is set before the Hebrew Christians. (Heb. vi. 1, &c.) They embraced the principles of the doctrine of Christ, but hesitating to go on to perfection, they must fall away. In Christ they have received the blessing of the Holy Ghost, the good treasure, to whom they must witness. But *if they fall back* into a rigid asceticism, how can they bring forth out of the good treasure things that are good? They have it not. And so they sin against the Spirit, they trample under foot the blood of the everlasting covenant—for the blood is the life, so they do despite to the Spirit of grace. So then, men, failing the whole truth, are filled with evil.

36, 37. In the severe teaching of our blessed Lord, no more severe than the truth demands, he anticipates the objector, "You may question the words of men, but I say unto you, I, the judge of all the earth, say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." If, therefore, every idle word? what shall they say for that condition that knows not God? Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. What, then, is an idle word? Simply that which is not spoken by the Spirit of our Father. So, then, by our words, we shall be accounted righteous, as they come forth from the indwelling fulness of God ; and by our words we shall be condemned, as they are the expression of sin, the heart being uncrucified.

38. The heart is deceitful above all things. It would appear to acquiesce in the pure and holy teaching of the Lord, and asks a sign. Whereas man is to be convinced by the Spirit witnessing with his spirit. But these would be convinced through that nature, through which it cannot be. And here arise the multi-form errors of men respecting the truths of God. It has, in the

whole controversy, been abundantly shown that before the Spirit, by his indwelling, can witness with our spirits, there must be the crucifixion of the old Adam. The Lord answers accordingly. In truest love he tells them, they are a sinful generation, Satan fills their hearts; they are adulterers; they have forsaken their God, and so have despised Christ and the Holy Spirit of God. A sinful and adulterous generation wants a sign. Surely it wants not the inward testimony of Christ? No: it wants that which is only outward. Yea, it wants an outward sign of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. But the only sign given is that of Jonas. It is remarkable how the *cross of Christ* is overlooked, and in particular in the sign of Jonas; for, if these Jews be filled with a blind and dumb devil, it is the yoke of Christ which alone meets their case. It crucifies the old Adam. It is said, "The sign of Jonas is the most remarkable foreshadowing in the Old Testament of the resurrection of our Lord."—*Alford*. Whereas it foreshadows rather the death and burial of Christ, with whom we are dead and buried; and our baptism is a witness that it is made effective in us, according to which should our whole life be.

41. So emphatic is the truth which respects Christ, and of which Jonas is the sign, that the Lord dwells upon it. And, while doing so, he brings into bold relief the covenant, which is of God, and which is interwoven with the very existence of the Jewish nation—a covenant now fully revealed; and since the middle wall of partition is broken down, it alone explains all time, all nature, all providence—yea, all relations, and the relative duties and responsibilities of all men.

The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment—the condemnation of all that maketh a lie, which all does that is not of the Father—with this generation, and shall condemn it. How, matters not. It at least expresses the high destiny of those who have repented, who have put off the old Adam and the world, and who will condemn those who have not.

Privileges unimproved will enhance our condemnation. We may see how, even under an imperfect dispensation, when the mystery of God was yet hid, the earnest soul sought a clean heart and a right spirit renewed within. It loved mercy, it did righteously, and so walked *humbly* with God. What, then, shall be said of those who claim to be teachers of the mystery now

revealed, yet understand not the righteousness of God, and pervert the ordinances of righteousness? The men of Nineveh, heathens sunk in sin and every enormity, hearing of the preaching of Jonas, who testified to *the redeeming mercy* of God, which he learned while in the whale's belly three days and three nights, even as Paul did, while for the like time he did neither eat nor drink and was blind, repented in sackcloth and ashes. They proclaimed a fast, and so gave intense expression to their inward condition. This fast signified what the cross effects—the entire and total renunciation of the flesh. That it was of universal application is signified by the command, that neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, should taste anything. They turned every one from his evil way, and so turned to God.

Here is another instance, showing that the Old and New Testaments reveal the same everlasting principles of the kingdom—judgment and righteousness. However, the men of Nineveh obeyed the truth on the testimony of Jonas. But there is here one greater than Jonas, to whom Jonas witnessed in the one important truth which he enforced, and of which he was the sign. He is Christ, who has buried us into death, even death to sin, and whose yoke all are to take, else we have no repentance, and we shall hereafter be condemned of the Ninevites, who will condemn all of such a generation.

42. To take the yoke of Christ and to learn of him—the Son—who alone reveals the Father, is to possess the whole covenant of God. David said to Solomon (1 Chron. xxii. 9—12), “The Word of Jehovah came to me, saying, Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man *of rest*; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days. He shall build an house for my name; and he shall be my son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever. Now, my son, the Lord be with thee; and prosper thou, and build the house of the Lord thy God, as he hath said of thee. Only the Lord give thee wisdom and understanding, and give thee charge concerning Israel, that thou mayst keep the law of the Lord thy God.” Thus, Solomon was the son, the wisdom of the true Father, who alone gives rest. And the Queen of Sheba came from the uttermost parts of the earth

to hear the wisdom of him, who was only the type of the true Son, the true wisdom of God, of him who alone revealed the Father, the true rest for man. Therefore, in the judgment, will the queen of the south rise and condemn this generation, since it rejects him who was greater than Solomon; and in rejecting him, it rejects him who sent him.

43. In the establishing of the throne of Christ, the Son of God, the restless one is cast out—ὁ πονηρός, the Evil One—from πονος, labour. He wanders in dry places where there is no water to cleanse him, like the scapegoat, with the accumulated guilt of Israel laid upon him; and so he seeks rest and finds none, a painful picture of man (ch. xi. 28). How graphic! how simple! are redemption and human responsibility, the grace of God, and man's free will. They are here clearly set forth; and we are, therefore, commanded to take the yoke—the cross of Christ. If Christ be in us, the body is dead, because of sin. So is Satan cast out. And then we are to occupy till Christ comes again, without sin unto salvation. We are to resist Satan, and he will flee from us; to know that our bodies are built in Christ by the Son, a holy temple for God. But how shall there be rest? how shall there be peace, but in the Spirit of a holy Father dwelling in this temple? And how shall the Father be revealed and known in the wisdom of the Son, except the kingdom of David be first established?

44. But all do not take the yoke and learn of the Son. Then, how fearful is the picture! The unclean spirit saith, I will return *into my house*. He returns in all his uncleanness, and he finds it empty, swept, and garnished.

We have, according to the eternal purpose of God in Christ, the Son of God, redemption and remission of sins, that we should trust in Christ, and be sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise unto the day of redemption of the purchased possession, when body, soul, and spirit, shall be the Lord's. Thus should we stand, equipped in the panoply of God, and occupy till Christ comes a second time. But what is the fact? God casts out, and to this end the body is dead; but man sweeps and adorns that which should be buried out of sight, and so Satan takes possession, and sin revives.

45. And he takes with him seven other spirits more wicked

than himself. Is this possible? Is there a spirit more wicked than Satan! O! what a mournful testimony is here to the awful deceitfulness of sin. Seven is the covenant number, and the Lord here intimates how, in what way, the last state of such an one is worse than the first. By the use of this number, we understand the unclean spirit comes in all the counterfeit of the truth—an Antichrist, in the place of Christ. Whatever, then, be the form of religion, however closely resembling the truth, so as to deceive the elect—those who possess it, and walk accordingly—the presence of the unclean spirit denies the cross. And the more remarkable be the resemblance to the true, the deeper and stronger is the prejudice. And so, parallel with the whole covenant, according to the eternal purpose in mercy and love, is the deceitfulness of sin to the destroying of the soul of man. This, then, is the fearful picture of the heart of man, clothed in the garb of a sanctimonious demeanour for the praise of man, as seen in men and in these Pharisees, *par excellence*, who reject Christ, who fail to take his yoke and learn of him.

46. An opportunity is providentially afforded for carrying home to the understanding of his hearers the truths he taught.

He is now told of his mother and his brethren standing without, desiring to speak with him. It is of little moment whether these were Jesus' uterine brothers or cousins. If it pleased him to take our nature with its infirmities, and in that nature to be made sin, what is there in his circumstances that these relations should be other than the most natural? Or, what necessity is there to give them other than their most natural signification? However, he now stands before the Father, witnessing to his kingdom, enforcing the necessity of his cross, by the sign of Jonas; they stand without. No sentiment supplants the truth of God in the mind of Jesus. What are earthly relations to him who is crucified to the world, and the world to him? who has said, he that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me? and has taught that he came to set a man at variance against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a man's foes shall be they of his own household? Shall he not, then, exhibit the truth in himself, as he says, he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me?

47. Doubtless, with sinister motives, the fact is notified to

him. In the construction of the sentence, "mother and brethren" are emphatic. He could read their thoughts, and, as a true scribe instructed in the kingdom, could draw upon providence and nature for illustrations of the glorious truths of which he was the faithful Teacher. Nothing can be more preposterous than to base any doctrine upon the earthly relations of the Lord Jesus. The Virgin was, indeed, blessed among women, for the Holy Ghost overshadowed her, and the Holy Thing she conceived was the Son of God. But the cross puts away all that is of the creature, that all that is of the Father may be revealed. Therefore, stretching forth his hand towards his disciples, who, by that name, had taken the yoke and learned of him, he said, Behold, my mother and my brethren! Now, the Lord has invited all to take his yoke, that he, as the Son, might reveal the Father in them. And here he distinctly states that that revelation must be effective, that the will of the Father must work within. Earthly relationships are not annihilated, they are merged in the heavenly. So, then, doing the will of our heavenly Father is not merely obeying a precept or commandment, but possessing that state or condition of heart wherein we are so related to the Son of God as to be able, by his Spirit, to cry, Abba, Father; and so his will works in us, according to his good pleasure. Thus, truly, may it be said, We ask and receive, seek and find, knock and it is opened to us. We take the yoke, we learn of the Spirit of the Son, and give proof that we are in the kingdom of our Father, doing his will on earth, as it is done in heaven.

CHAPTER XIII.

- 1 THE same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. And
2 great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a
ship, and sat ; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.
- 3 And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a
4 sower went forth to sow ; and when he sowed, some *seeds* fell by the way
5 side, and the fowls came and devoured them up. Some fell upon stony
places, where they had not much earth : and forthwith they sprung up,
6 because they had no deepness of earth ; and when the sun was up, they
7 were scorched ; and because they had no root, they withered away. And
8 some fell among thorns ; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them. But
other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold
9 some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.
- 10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto
11 them in parables ? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given
unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it
12 is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have
more abundance : but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away
13 even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables : because they
seeing see not ; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.
- 14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye
shall hear, and shall not understand ; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not
15 perceive : for this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of
hearing, and their eyes they have closed ; lest at any time they should see
with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their*
16 heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed *are*
17 your eyes, for they see : and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto
you, That many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see *those things*
which ye see, and have not seen *them* ; and to hear *those things* which ye
hear, and have not heard *them*.
- 18 Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the
19 word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked
one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which
20 received seed by the way side. But he that received the seed into stony
places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth
21 it ; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while : for when tri-
bulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is

22 offended. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke
23 the word, and he becometh unfruitful. But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

24 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven
25 is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.
26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared
27 the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath
28 it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants
29 said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat
30 with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

31 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his
32 field: which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

33 Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

34 All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house. And his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of
37 the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children
38 of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world;
40 and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and
41 burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all
42 things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a
43 furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

44 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the

which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking
46 goodly pearls : who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the
48 sea, and gathered of every kind : which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad
49 away. So shall it be at the end of the world : the angels shall come forth,
50 and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire : there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

51 Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things ? They say
52 unto him, Yea, Lord. Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe *which* is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that* is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure *things* new and old.

53 AND it came to pass, *that* when Jesus had finished these parables, he
54 departed thence. And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said,
55 Whence hath this *man* this wisdom, and *these* mighty works ? Is not this the carpenter's son ? Is not his mother called Mary ? and his brethren,
56 James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas ? And his sisters, are they not all
57 with us ? Whence then hath this *man* all these things ? And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without
58 honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

THE matter of this chapter is not second to that of "the Sermon on the Mount." The place it holds, in relation to what goes before, is most important. The Evangelist, in the genealogy, has respect to the covenant, the manifestation of God with us ; then the coming of Jesus Christ as the covenant, and it revealed in the Baptist and Jesus ; the calling of the four disciples, intimating the healing and calling of all men into Christ, and, therefore, the obligation to walk according to the truths of the kingdom and righteousness of God, as set forth in the Sermon on the Mount—this followed by the appropriation of the truth, and a preserving of it from the errors of men.

The relation of these seven parables to what goes before ; their value, as giving a clear exposition of the covenant, and *so the ground* of the Lord's teaching ; and, lastly, their separate, distinct, and precise teaching, cannot be too highly estimated.

It is of little value what may be said in explanation of the word parable. These explain themselves, and give an idea of the word far better than any explanation can. We would simply repeat that all Nature, in all her laws, is stamped with, comes forth impressed with, the everlasting covenant. And when science shall reach its climax, it will have to wait upon him who truly sets forth everlasting and imperishable truth.

Obviously, much may be gathered from different writers in the New Testament as expository of truth; but here we are bound to keep to our Evangelist, and as the Old Testament was sufficient for reference by the Lord, it will be sufficient for us. Not but the epistles of the Lord's immediate followers, after they had received the Holy Ghost, are a very acceptable commentary on the Lord's teaching.

Perceiving the multitudes, he left the house for the sea-shore, and when they were gathered about him, he addressed them from the ship which he entered, and in which he sat. He now speaks to them many things in parables, and limits his teaching to seven—the number of the covenant; which is also observed in the division of those he addressed—being four, as representing every creature to whom this Gospel of the kingdom is preached—and the Three Persons of the Trinity, whom he sets forth as the substance of the covenant.

The seed is sown broadcast. If the seed is the Word of God, how comes the different kinds of ground? It may be said, "This results from the different circumstances of life." Then circumstances, over which we have no control, would be responsible for our not obeying. On this ground they to whom the Word of God has never yet come, may object. Let us not be deceived; God deals with every man according to his everlasting covenant; and every man has a law within him excusing or accusing him: and according to it will every man be judged. (Rom. ii. 25, 29.)

Let no man place himself in a false position, for he cannot urge indifference or ignorance where civilization reaches him. Much less can they, who do not set themselves to the obedience of *the Word of God*, and receive the truth in all its simplicity. The parable then supposes what has gone before, and so the explanation of it is delayed until the question "Why teachest thou in parables?" is answered.

10. The disciples come and say unto him, "Why speakest thou in parables?" The reply is, "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, but to them it is not given." Do they understand the Lord? It is given to them, because they are disciples—have taken the cross; have followed Jesus—have testified to the purpose of the Father to all men; all which was only outward. Nevertheless, we are therein taught the truth itself; that it is given to all to know the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, *who take the yoke of Christ, and learn of the Son*. Then if given because of discipleship, how much more so as sent of God to proclaim the kingdom? No man can be a prophet, except he be a righteous man; no man can be this, except he first be a disciple. If thus a prophet, he will magnify his office, and not himself. The Lord's reply teaches how it is that party views, strifes, and contentions arise; and our experience confirms it. "Except you carry my cross, you cannot be my disciple." This, *at the outset*, levels all the glory of man. If men are true ambassadors for God, the truth must come from the untainted source, from the Word itself, free from human conceits and worldly expediency.

Surely, the high importance of this is seen in the following sentence of the Lord's reply: But to others it is *not given*. Such make not effective the cross of Christ; they obey not the Word, therefore are they taught in parables. Nature, who waits on man, is to teach him. So, then, in every pathway of life, she is calling him to the obedience of the truth, to manifest himself a son of God.

12. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly. Whosoever *hath the Christ* is dead to all, then is given to him *the Spirit of the Son* in whom he has life, and shall have it more abundantly. (Eph. ii. 7.) He grows in a deeper and fuller knowledge of the Father, for he that *abideth* in the doctrine of Christ hath both the Father and the Son. But whosoever hath not—that is, maketh not effective the *grace bestowed*, taketh not the yoke—from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Thus, then, the Word clearly reveals a man's position, what, in the grace of God, he has, and what he is to do.

13. He spake in parables, that the multitudes might see, hear, understand. They behold one greater than the temple, the Lord

of the Sabbath ; one greater than Jonas, one greater than Solomon : they see his mighty works testifying to the kingdom ; they hear his words—words of life, in which a Father is revealing himself—but they do not understand. Therefore, he speaks in parables. So, then, Nature is loudly eloquent, *calling them back to the Word*, as she in every pathway of life, and in the most humble pursuits, teaches the eternal truths of the kingdom. They see these outward, yet warm and living witnesses to what is ; but they do not see the invisible truths to which they testify. These to whom the Lord came, to whom are committed the oracles of God and circumcision, and to whom all nature, according to the words of the wisdom of God, is bearing testimony, seeing, see not : hearing, hear not. And so in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah vi. 8. The prophet is identified with the people. He is of unclean lips, as they are. A live coal from the altar of God is laid upon his mouth. Thus his iniquity was taken away, and his sin purged. So, what was done to him was symbolical of what was done to all. It was the sign of what God had done for Israel by the holiness of God ; for our God is a consuming fire. And he was to go to the people and tell them (xliv. 22, 23). They would hear, but not understand ; they would see, but not perceive ; for their heart was waxed fat, their ears were made heavy, and they shut their eyes, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and the Lord should heal them. They were entranced by sin, and could not see it.

It is painful to reflect how privileges abused increase our condemnation ; not, indeed, by any arbitrary decree, but from the very nature of things. Evil, if not crucified, strengthens itself. And our desire for earthly things may be enlarged as hell. Delay increases it, so that no man is at any given moment the same as previously. Therefore, it is said, Make the heart of this people fat : make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes—which, indeed, was fulfilled when One greater than the prophet, greater than the seraphim, came and identified himself with all men, even the most degraded, among whom he dwelt, and for all became sin. Man rejects the Word of God, the testimony of Nature, the visitations of Providence, and increases in carnal strength—in the lusts of the flesh and of the mind—lest, at any time, such is

the baleful influence of Satan, he should be converted and healed. No man, then, can trifle with the present.

Has he, then, an intuitive knowledge of divine things? The Lord's answer implies that there is in man, not as of himself, but of the grace of God, a condition or power corresponding to the moral fitness of things—that, as the principles or laws in nature correspond or are analogous to those in the kingdom of God, so should there be in man those principles themselves, to be manifested, even as nature obeys her laws. (Rom. viii. 2.) If not, then Nature strews his path with her witnesses, that he may learn of her; but rejecting the Word, he cannot.

In our depraved nature there is a ceaseless antagonism to the will of the Father. This is not nature, but contrary to it. The filial relation consists not in a mere observance of positive commandments, but in the divine indwelling, when we possess the mysteries of the kingdom, to which not only the Word in every part, but all nature testifies.

Thus, in the prevenient grace of God, which has ever been in advance of the creature, it is within the power of all men to exhibit the eternal principles shadowed out in the parables of life.

Then, without speculating upon the nature and power of reason, conscience, and the moral sense in respect to spiritual things, we may simply remark, the more exact be the reasoning faculty, as the result of scientific knowledge, the greater is the obligation to take the yoke of Christ and learn of him, else Satan blinds us to our greater condemnation.

16. But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. As disciples, they are purged from the blind and deaf spirit, and so present *a proper receptivity* for the blessing of God, even as the eye sees, and the ear hears. (1 John i. 1—4, with John xx. 29.)

17. Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see the things which ye see, and to hear the things which ye hear. The disciples saw and heard, had a visible and tangible fulfilment of the promise of God. They saw, they heard, they handled the Word of life, and they followed Jesus. So they were blessed. It was a visible manifestation of the truth of God in the soul of man, to which righteous men and prophets testified.

In the interpretation of the parable of the Sower, two important things are premised—the nature of the seed and the state of the ground.

With respect to the first, it is asked, Is the Bible the Word of God? or, does it contain it? The Lord answers the question, saying: The seed is the Word of God. The analogy is striking and instructive. As the seed, the Bible contains the Word of God—that is, it conveys invisible and spiritual truth. The seed is made the vehicle or channel of a living principle, which comes forth as new life in a new plant, *upon the death and dissolution* of that which is seen and handled.

The written Word, then, in respect to the Word of God, is as the casket to the jewel—an earthen vessel containing a heavenly treasure, which is possessed only as the former passes away. Thus the Word, as the seed, attests its own principles, and reproduces in man, as the ground, those eternal truths which are so shadowed forth by nature. Except a corn of wheat falleth into the ground and die, it abideth alone: *but if it die*, it bringeth forth much fruit. (John xii. 24.)

Then, with respect to the nature of the ground, the Lord has said, even with regard to the most obstinate, if they have not, that which they have shall be taken from them. And what is this but the grace of God bestowed. It is the covenant. There is, then, a wonderful adaptation in the ground to the seed—so that to hear the Word is to become identified with that it reveals.

To be allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel of his grace, is of all honours the highest, and of all responsibilities the most sacred and the most solemn. To be a sower of the Word, is to be above all the dignities of earth, for such is a scribe built up *into the kingdom of the heavens*.

Then, should a sower of the Word begin by confessing his ignorance of that Word? Should he fall back upon the interpretations, modifications, and restrictions of men? How should such bind him who, by his very office, is commissioned to declare the Word, in all its fulness, to all men, who are here represented by the four classes of hearers? “Know ye not this parable? how then shall ye know all parables?” A true scribe, then, is to know all parables, and, by implication, the whole of the Word of life. Would that men, who take upon themselves to sow the Word,

would lay to heart these words of Christ respecting this parable, as they have regard to the one fundamental truth of the Gospel, which is at the threshold of the covenant, and which is ever found distinctly stated or implied in the Lord's teaching. It is, then, with great pain that we read in the writings of one who is recognised as an authority, that *inability* to explain this parable is to be attributed to the inscrutable and sovereign arrangements of God. (*Dean Alford.*) God has indeed *revealed himself as a King*, but he is such only as against all adverse power, and to the overthrow of all that would exalt itself against the knowledge of God, and therefore against all ignorance of the Paternity. And since he has *revealed himself as a Father*, it is within the power of all men to obey the filial relation in which *this revelation has placed him*. If ye know not this parable, how then shall ye know all parables? Its salient truth is not only in the forefront of the Lord's teaching, but is the very beginning of Christian life. It is the "*holy commandment*" to all: *By the grace* of God, through Christ and the Spirit in all men, at birth, sin is dead, and the Spirit is life; but when the *holy commandment* comes, which is *to make effective the grace of God*, sin revives, and the life departs. (Rom. vii. 8—11.)

The Lord Jesus is here the Sower, and so our Exemplar. He is the true Scribe, and shows us how to bring forth out of our treasure things new and old. Matthew, no doubt, by the position of these parables in respect to the truths taught in the preceding chapters, would intimate that one instructed thus far—of course, in "the Word of God, and not the word of men"—was duly qualified to sow the seed of the kingdom.

The Word is a revelation; and the invisible things of God are to be apprehended by the spiritual faculties, even as the visible by the sensuous; for the invisible things of God are spiritually discerned. The very revelation of spiritual realities gives a man power to obey them; yea, not to obey them is to fight against them.

The Word reveals the covenant in a Triune God—Father, Son, and Spirit. It reveals Melchizedek—King, Righteousness, the two truths of the covenant; and all men in relation to it. It reveals man's glorious destiny, created for a little while lower than the angels, to be crowned with honour and glory. It reveals

his fall—his departure from the true centre of his being—and his being possessed by a sinful and depraved nature ; which ever lusts after the creature. It reveals his restoration in Christ Jesus, sin destroyed, Satan cast out, and so the soul purged, that it may be a holy temple for the indwelling fulness of God. Therefore should every man be a *holy and purged vessel*, and he is so only as he obeys the truth—realises and makes effective his membership in the *one body* of Christ. This brings us to the consideration of the salient truth of this parable, which is confessed to be difficult.

No man comes to the Word of God uninfluenced. We must here draw a marked distinction between the Word of God and the word of men. Many preach the word of men ; the Apostle implies as much. (1 Thess. ii. 13.) The Word *reveals* invisible truths, everlasting realities, and to those who lay hold of them as things that are, it works in them effectually. Ye *are clean*, says the Lord, through the Word which I have spoken unto you. It reveals all men in Christ ; Peter so understood it, when his prejudices were cut down ; “ for God,” he says, “ hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.” (Acts x. 28.) What God hath cleansed call not thou common ; and he was shown that he had cleansed the world in Christ. Wherefore, should every man obey the truth, obey what is, “ abide in Christ ”—crucified to the world, and the world to him, for *without Christ* he can do nothing. So Paul says, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake ; for when *I am weak*, then am I strong ; for I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. It is, then, within the power of any man to abide in Christ ; and the body of Christ is *the good ground*. The Word of God reveals that man is clean ; for God hath gathered all things into one, even into Christ. (Eph. i. 10.) How important, then, is it that we put off the old Adam, which is corrupt, according to *the deceitful lusts* ; and put on the new man, created after God in righteousness and holiness of the truth ! In this holiness of the truth, that is in Christ the good ground, righteousness takes root and bears its fruit.

No man, whatever be his prejudices ; however distinguished his position, is to call any man unclean. The Lord places this

condition last, not only to signify, as the fourth, that it is the property of all men, but, further, that the next parable, having respect to the Father, the revelation, as there, results into two classes, and two only : for here it is the sowing of the seed, and there the result of that sowing.

Let us follow the order of the Lord's teaching. In this chapter are seven parables ; by which number he signifies the covenant. So, then, in these parables is unfolded the covenant of God. The first is the simple fact—the covenant made with all flesh. Such is the teaching of the parable of the sower, and the condition of all flesh in relation to it. Then the parables of the Father, Son, and Spirit, respectively ; then the hid treasure as the work of Christ, and the pearl of great price, the work of the Spirit, in whom is righteousness, the true life ; and, lastly, all men in relation to the covenant.

In the four classes of hearers of the Word, the Lord regards all men as coming within the revelation of the truth, as he says, *He that hath ears to hear let him hear*. These four classes he divides into two—those who understand, and those who do not. The latter includes the first three classes, of which we now take the first.

4, 19. The field in which the Sower went forth to sow appears to have had a well-trodden path ; such, perhaps, as that on which the Lord, with his disciples, walked, when they plucked the ears of corn and did eat. The other parts were ploughed. The Sower casts his seed—some falls on the pathway. It is at once taken away by the birds, which follow his track. Thus the enemy snatches away from every one hearing the Word, and not understanding it, the everlasting treasure of the kingdom.

How simple is the truth it reveals. It is the Word of the kingdom ; and, so, emphatically of Christ. He who understands not the Word understands not Christ ; therefore cannot know the Father, whom the Son reveals. He does not present the receptivity, because he sees not the cross—the *condition* which the Word demands. No man can live to himself. His relation to these realities is undeniable. And his conduct in respect of them cannot but produce definite results. He receives the Word into his heart. Thus the kingdom is revealed ; yet, because he perceives not the everlasting verities, and so refuses the condition

necessary to retain them—that is, to take the yoke and learn of the Son—the wicked one, who unceasingly toils to thwart the purposes of the Father, comes with no uncertain success, and snatches away *what has been sown* in the heart.

The seed is sown. Yea: rather, in the mysterious language of Jesus, the hearer himself is sown; but, alas! he understands not, he conforms not to what is sown. His inward condition is in no-wise corresponding to, or agrees with, the realities revealed. We here take the highest form of this type—men of education, mature erudition, and extensive scientific research, who live for their age. It is a secularism that, according to itself, determines the interpretation of the Word of God—so, then, from man's and not from God's ground is the sense of the Word given. And they understand not how that the invisible things of God, his eternal power and Godhead, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made. (Rom. i. 20.)

5, 20. The second class receive the seed into stony or rocky places. There is but little earth, though ploughed. Upon this the seed falls. This ground is worse than the former. It, regarding the blessings, receives the Word with joy. The seed is the same. These also are sown. But what is the ground presented? Is it the condition necessary and indispensable for that perfect joy with which no man can intermeddle? Intellectually apprehending, apprehending the blessings of grace, yet not presenting the condition necessary, they are in a worse condition than the way-side hearers. In the words of Jesus, they have no root *in themselves*. The beginning, in its reality, is wanting. They see the necessity of the cross, *but it is only outward*. They restrain themselves in their outward life, while their inward condition becomes as adamant. All is outward—there is *no root within*. That root is Christ. Having not the root, they have not the life. Yet they endure for a while, but when tribulation, or divine visitation, or persecution by evil ariseth, they are offended—scandalized, they fall away. That which, in the providence of God, would nourish the life, because there lacks that which should precede it, comes with burning heat, and the plant withers away.

Tribulation, or persecution, because of the Word, comes, not

only to prove the presence of the root, but also to develop the life. There is a beautiful fitness in the imagery of the root. It is that part which is hid, out of sight, buried. If, then, we have the root we are in Christ, dead, *buried with him*. We are planted in the likeness of his death, then through the root, the living sap rises, and empties itself into fruit, and so we are in the likeness of his resurrection life.

Men may reverently kiss the cross, wear a sanctimonious garb, abstain from fleshly indulgences, yet be strangers to that experience of glorying in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we are crucified to the world, and the world to us. *They endure for a while*. And what imagery can be more expressive of this than the egg during the period of incubation!—the life within, if the shell *be not clipped*, is suffocated. But this is still more expressive in the seed itself. When sown, if followed by a long drought, the external membrane becomes tough, and, for the lack of moisture, it continues so. The rain and the sun are two unceasing witnesses to the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. (Heb. vi. 7.) The former causes the seed to swell and burst, while the latter draws forth the life as from the root. So long, then, as the outer membrane of the seed is tough, there is no root. Though the parable teaches the adverse condition to be in the ground, we nevertheless catch the idea in the seed apart from the ground; in which case, the seed would not be the Word of God, but man himself. Whereas the seed, as the Word, implies in itself nothing adverse, but all necessary to the future plant.

In Christ Jesus we have the house of bondage broken up, and the manifestation of life; and tribulation and persecution are then necessary for the continuance of these blessings. Tribulation is God's flail, the *θλιψις*, or bursting of the outer covering; and persecution drives us to our only refuge—Jehovah himself. Tribulation and persecution *are because of the Word*, of what God has done. For, if we would be according to it, we must come out from that hard and stony condition, when we shall experience tribulation from God, and persecution from our former co-religionists. So, in a painful sense of desolation, does the root develop itself.

This hard and stony ground finds its highest form of type in an outward visible Church—a sacerdotalism or Pharasaic resting

in what is visible and tangible—a very bigoted and self-deceived class—a class that exhibited themselves in all their untempered zeal against the Lord, even as they do now.

7, 22. In the third class, the ground also is ploughed. It receives the seed. It recognises the grace of God in the cross and the Spirit, also the advantages of tribulation and persecution. Then, what is the characteristic feature of this class? They possess the root and the life, but it comes to nought. The seed is choked, and brings forth no fruit to perfection. How so? There are other roots—roots of bitterness, *that have not been uprooted*. There is no difficulty in discovering this class. The truth of God distinguishes them. They rest in a forensic righteousness and in the gift of the Spirit, and what is their fruit but accordingly. They teach a scheme, or system of religious faith, which is not according to the Word. They confess to these bitter roots, but they do not seek to uproot them, saying, You cannot be perfect. They do not hesitate to confess to them; but they see not, they teach not, Christ. They make redemption to be a belief in a forensic righteousness or “justification,” instead of Christ crucified—a practical reality, lifted up in the heart, demonstrated in the life, whereby the hard ground is broken up, and the bitter roots are uprooted.

Instead of taking *the ground of the kingdom* in Christ, and so understanding their right relation to it, and to visible things, they allow the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, to spring up and choke the seed, and so they become unfruitful. Not knowing Christ they cannot, their words do not, ever and unceasingly, witness to him, for the tendencies of the age are only outward, and to this life, as we see the numberless means for ameliorating the condition of the necessitous.

The relative duties and responsibilities of this life are here referred to, and these apparently the most lawful and commendable. But since they are of earth, they are at the best but expressive signs of corresponding heavenly ones, and they have their proper place, which they take only through Christ crucified, as the Lord himself taught when he was told that his mother and brethren stood without desiring to speak to him.

Losing sight of Christ crucified, as the condition indispensable to the possession of the Spirit, they have but an imperfect faith,

and its fruit is accordingly. Moreover, they are exclusive and sectarian, and because of their imperfect system, or scheme of religion, *and which is not according to the seed*, they cannot embrace, with a catholic spirit, the whole family of man, as the family of a holy God, forgetting that the seed is the same to all classes, and that he who obeys the truth—possesses the good ground—testifies that it is so.

There is no condition more deceptive than that of this class, wherefore the prophet says, *Break up* your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.

8, 23. The fourth class are the good ground. They hear the Word, *they understand it*, and bring forth fruit, some a hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirtyfold.

These are not some as specially chosen. If so, what does the parable teach? These understand the Word, to take the yoke of Christ, and in the Son know the Father, and they obey it. They have the root, and the old roots are all uprooted. They search diligently, lest any one root should remain, and, springing up, defile them. In Christ, through the cross, they are holy. One root defiles, and so holiness departs; but in them the old man is crucified, put off, so the enmity is slain, and the body of sin destroyed. Having taken the yoke, the Father is revealed in them as they do his will, so they bring forth fruit—the fruits of judgment and righteousness, that which God looks for, fruit unto perfection—perfect, as dead to sin and alive to God.

It is confessed a great difficulty to explain the good ground; certainly it is, and must be to any one who comes in the category of the three classes preceding this; but it is no difficulty to him who understands the Word and obeys it. The fruit yielded is according to the opportunity or circumstances. Some are more favourable than others for its development.

He, then, that hath ears to hear, let him hear. As there is a wonderful adaptation of the ear to sound, which it receives, so is there in man to the truth of God. It meets his deepest need, the very essence of his being for time and eternity. He that is of the truth heareth my words, says the Lord Jesus.

24. The kingdom of the heavens—the covenant—is like unto a man which sowed seed in his field. The field is the world, and it is his who sows it; and so the kingdom is co-extensive. He

who sows the seed is the Son of man—a term, as we have already seen, of deep significance. It is the name of Christ, the Son of God, as the covenant—a name he delighted in. It identified him with man in the deepest wants of his soul. It witnessed also to the Father.

As the incarnate Word, as the Son of man revealing the Father, who is the Father of the spirits of all flesh, he sows the seed. He is the incorruptible seed. He sows himself, that men should be conformed to him.

To the Israelites pertained the adoption. They were called out to witness, at least visibly, to the Father, in whom all the families of the earth were blessed. Failing to realise this inner blessing, they rested in that which was outward; hence the enmity, strong in commandments and ordinances, which was slain in Christ crucified, when all that was distinctive between Jew and Gentile was merged in the one body—Christ—that all might, by one Spirit, *through him*, have access unto the Father. Thus, the middle wall of partition was broken down, *and adoption* in its universal application was revealed. It is the birthright of all men—to which they were predestined, and for which they were created and redeemed, realised only in Christ the Son of God. In him all things, both in heaven and in earth, are gathered; and, as the Son, he ever reveals the Father. He reveals him in the hearts of men; for, to as many as receive him, to them he gives power to become sons of God—a truth which will be fully vindicated when the last enemy, which gives the lie to God's paternity, shall be destroyed, and the Father shall be all and in all.

But when did he sow the good seed in his field? The everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, has been throughout all time, and is now fully revealed in Christ the Son of God. So the grace of God, which bringeth salvation to all men, is manifested. Thus is the seed of the Father sown, and it is according to himself. It was manifested when Jesus put away all that was not of the Father, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, which are of the world, and revealed all that is of the Father.

The will of the Father, as consistent with his great name, is that not one should perish. The covenant is sown, and all men have an interest in it. Every child coming into the world, though

conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity, is, in the grace of God, embraced by the everlasting arms. Thus the grace of God sows good seed, and by it sin is dead and the neophyte is alive to God. (Rom. vii. 8, 9.) Such are children of the kingdom. So true is it that these little ones are of the kingdom, that "their angels do always behold the face of *their Father* in heaven."

But while men slept, an enemy came and sowed tares. It is the time of night—the hour of evil, when darkness reigns. God gives light, but men love darkness, and so present, in their depraved nature, a receptivity for the sowing of the Evil One.

Our normal condition is light. The Book of Genesis is not read. Otherwise, men would not miss that truth which stands out in as bold relief as any other. We are the children of Noah, children of redemption, and of blessing. The whole world is descended from Noah, as it is from Adam. And thus the covenant of God, which was then declared to be with all flesh, teaches us how, in the waters of the flood, the old nature is buried into death, and the soul rests in a Triune God. In this parable we ask, since the Father is revealed, is man destroyed? If he perish, whose fault is it?

If we train our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, it will be to teach them how *to overcome*, as children of the true Father. It is high time that all should awake out of sleep, cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light. The good seed are children of the kingdom. They are of the light. The tares are the children of the wicked one—of him whose one object and unceasing endeavour is to annihilate the Paternity.

The disciples, in their ignorance, call this the parable of the tares. They ask the Lord to explain it. He does so, and shows that it is the parable of the Father—the truth which lies at the foundation of the covenant. Paul, speaking of himself (Rom. vii. 8—10), illustrates this parable; he says, without the law—before he was circumcised—*sin was dead*, for *I was alive* without the law once: this is the grace of God to all men, of which circumcision, or baptism is the sign; but when the commandment, which was ordained to life—to walk accordingly—came, *sin revived*, and *I died*. But when he obeyed the truth he testified accordingly. (Gal. ii. 19—21; iii. 23, 24.)

God has cleansed the world. The Word reveals Christ as having prepared the good ground. Assuming, then, that the ground is prepared for the seed, and the sower sows good seed, the question naturally put is, Whence come the tares? If Christ has cleansed the world, no man is common or unclean, for God is the Father of the spirits of all flesh, and has poured out his Spirit upon all flesh, yet, co-extensively with this grace, the enemy sowed his tares. He sowed his tares *among the wheat*, and went his way.

A child, coming into this world with the depraved nature of the first Adam, is made partaker of the blessing of the Father in the last Adam. If, then, the last Adam does not take the place of the first, how can his work be co-extensive with that of the first? But he is come to destroy the works of the devil, for God is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe. Man's normal condition is restoration, for the covenant is made with *all flesh*. But the enemy sowed his tares *among the wheat*, and went his way. Though the works of the devil be destroyed, he is yet permitted to sow his tares. And this he did while men slept. The Word reveals what is, and faith is the possession and demonstration of what the Word reveals. Still, until spiritual life develops itself, all is as sleep, and so the blessings of the covenant are in abeyance. During this period, so from our earliest infancy, the enemy, though his works are destroyed, sows his tares, which are uprooted only by faith in and through Christ crucified.

But when the blade sprung up and brought forth fruit, there appeared the tares also—Isaacs and Ishmaels. It is, then, to whom does the empire of the heart belong? Are we children of promise according to the covenant, who are begotten where the flesh is put off (Gen. xvii. 26; xviii. 10), or are we born after the flesh in uncircumcision? Are we a Jacob? or an Esau?—one who strives for the dew of heaven? or for the fatness of the earth? Thus is brought out in distinct relief, and represented by different individuals, what is in every man, whether he is led by the Spirit, or walks after the flesh. (Rom. viii. 9, 14.) Herein we learn how, while the Father changeth not, some grow up in his fear, and some do not. The Father has restored all things. The enemy has sown his tares, and with them that love darkness

better than light, he troubles not himself. They, then, who continue in the bondage of sin and death, despite the revelation of the Father, are of their father the devil—children of the wicked one, and his works they do.

28. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou that we go and gather up the tares? This may appear as strange language in a parable revealing the Father; nevertheless it is true, and has a very important meaning. It is different from the language of the unbeliever, who, a stranger to his own sinful condition, asks, "Why is there all this sorrow, sickness, and death?" for it is the language of holiness. The angels of God represent this glorious perfection of the Almighty, and they know that holiness cannot dwell with iniquity. In the revelation of the Father there must be no sacrifice of this holiness—the crown of his perfections. *On this ground* angels, as the elder brother, object to the returning prodigal. Holiness would destroy at once these tares, but there is the love of the Father; and they who possess this love possess it only as they first *agree with their adversary*—partake of the holiness of God. So this love replies, "Let both grow together." Thus "*the children of the kingdom*"—a pregnant phrase—manifesting love and holiness, reveal the Father, and so, as brands snatched from the burning, testify to him that others may know his long-suffering mercy and goodness, and how that he would have all men come to the knowledge of the truth.

Let them grow together *until harvest*. Then, when the boundless love of the Father has been spurned, despised, trampled under foot, will the Son of man command his reapers to go forth. Holy angels will then go forth and gather out all scandals, and those that do iniquity—those who are without filial love to God.

It will be the Son of man that will send forth his angels. He loved this name. It told of the Father's boundless love, leaving no child of man uncared for. Then what pain, what anguish, does he not feel, beholding man destroying himself, ignoring the Paternity of the ever blessed One? However, he will in love uphold this honoured name, and banish away all that is not of the Father, then God will be all and in all.

Is it not the truest love that, while it does not allow the tares to be pulled, it yet warns them of their condition, and everlast-

ing portion, when they will be gathered and burned in a furnace of fire?

When the servants—the *holy* angels—shall have thus obeyed the law of things, then shall the righteous shine forth in the kingdom of their Father. They have sought first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. They are perfect as their Father in heaven is perfect. Then when the veil of darkness shall be forever removed, and they shall see God with unclouded sight, shall they shine forth in all the distinctive glory of the Father. Then should not every one, and particularly every father, witness to the everlasting Paternity, to the Fatherhood of God? Such a father would uphold his relation to his child, yet be unsparing of the evil that would destroy that relation. Thus he attests the Father, not indeed by disheartening or discouraging his child in continually opposing him, but in opposing the evil, and leading him to see his thralldom. Such a course of action is readily acquiesced in by fathers, but they reply, Children will not obey, will not listen. Is there not here a self-condemnation, with an attempt to exonerate themselves at the expense of their children? Men do not consider their line of duty irrespective of results, but rather determine the nature of, and gauge their principles by results. So, then, whatever is effective is right, hence they do not begin with themselves in upholding the paternal character.

The Lord testifies to the universal tendency of the truth, saying, Whosoever hath ears to hear, let him hear.

31, 32. The parables in this chapter necessarily stand in the closest relation. They in nowise repeat the truth, but present it in its distinctive and essential order.

In the preceding parable—commonly called the parable of the tares, whereas it is that of the Father—the Father of the spirits of all flesh is revealed. In the fall man destroyed the adoption of a son of God, and became the child of the devil; but he was then redeemed from all evil, and all that is not of the Father. And in order to prove him, the enemy is permitted to sow his tares. And withal it rests with every man, since the Father in creation, providence, and grace is unchangeably the same, whether he is a child of obedience or disobedience.

The kingdom of the heavens is like to a grain of mustard seed. All seeds beautifully illustrate the Word. When received, all

that is visible perishes, and the soul embraces the eternal verities of the kingdom, which the Word reveals.

Here the grain of mustard seed is the one seed; as Paul would say, not seeds, but as of one, and that Christ. This one seed obeys the universal law. Except it fall into the ground *and die*, it will be alone, it will never wax a great tree. This seed a man sows in his field. He who sowed the seed is the Father—who hath gathered all into one into Christ, both in heaven and in earth, even in him. (Eph. i. 10.) Therefore, said Jesus, doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father. (John x. 17, 18.) The field is the world. This one grain is sown in this field. So is represented Christ, the one seed, and him dead and buried. In his death he died for all, and so dying he condemned sin in the flesh. So, through him, our body is dead, because of sin. We thus judge if one died for all, *then all died*; that they who live should henceforth not live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again. (2 Cor. v. 15: Rom. vii. 4.) Hence it is that all men coming into this world, while they have the marks, the taint of the first Adam, have the restoration in the last Adam; for as by one man's disobedience *the many* were made sinners, so, by the obedience of one, *the many* shall be made righteous. Thus, in the first Adam, we inherit a disobeying nature—sin and death ever acting according to their law; and in the last Adam we inherit righteousness, the Spirit of life, who ever acts according to his own law.

We need not stop for one moment to notice the absurd and puerile explanations given of these parables, but we do condemn the interpretations which spring from the conceits of men, and are not the natural and orderly unfolding of truth.

In Jesus being made sin for man, he was less than all seeds—he was a worm and no man. But when this seed was grown it became greater than all herbs, for in him dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily. In the branches of this tree the birds of the air lodge. If we take his yoke we know Christ. If we have learned of him to find rest for our souls, it is in a unity, oneness with him, for if we abide in the doctrine of Christ, we have both

the Father and the Son—we are filled with the fulness of God. This is the purpose of the Father, according to the counsel of his own will. If he predestinated and created man to walk before him as a son, holy, without blame in love, and, although man fell, has redeemed him in Christ, and made him accepted in the Beloved, then is he to trust in Christ, that he may be sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

In that sowing of the seed, *all men died*. In that springing forth of the tree, *all men rose*. It is the covenant—we are in Christ, and sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. This is perfect rest. It is rest to body, soul, and spirit. It is perfect rest, for it is the fulness for which man was created and is destined. Paul would say, I am crucified with Christ—Christ liveth in me; and, being risen with Christ, I seek the things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God; for my life is hid with Christ in God.

33. What is the third fundamental truth the Word reveals? What should we expect after the Father and the Son, but the testimony of the Holy Spirit of God, and his operations in the economy of grace!

Where are we to discover the Spirit? In the leaven. Then who is the woman? She is the covenant. In the Third Person of the Trinity it has its full expression. There is a fitness in a woman expressing the covenant, as in her is begotten the witness to the Paternity. Thus Sarah and Hagar, with their respective children, set forth the covenant—the former according to the eternal purpose; the latter, despite adverse circumstances. The Paternity of God is unchangeable. And although man, by reason of sin, is alone, desolate, cut off from the centre of life; yet desolate cities are to be inhabited; children of the desolate one are to be children of the married wife. (Is. liv. 1—5.)

Holding fast the truth revealed in the mustard seed, the covenant is a reality. All are gathered into Christ. Therefore, *into all* so gathered, the woman hides the leaven. All men are signified by the three measures of meal. All men are descended from the three sons of Noah, the sons of rest. We find rest for our souls when we possess the covenant, according as it was revealed to Noah, and by Jesus, as here—in the destruction of *all* flesh, and the saving of *all* souls; *twice four* in the *tripartite* ark.

Having, then, the Spirit, he works as leaven in all his transforming power. Being dead by the body of Christ, and being alive by the indwelling Spirit, we, through the Spirit, continually mortify the flesh, and all its affections and lusts, for the gracious work of the Spirit is to apply the things of Christ, and to lead us into all truth.

Until the whole is leavened. The purpose of God stands. Who resists his will? We stand related to glorious and stupendous realities. What, then, if a miserable nonentity resists? We can no more stay the going forth of truth, any more than we can the diurnal revolution of the earth. If, then, any man be not in Christ, and, therefore, is not leavened by the Holy Spirit of God, he is fortifying himself against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of a holy God. Rather let us by the mercies of God present our bodies a *living sacrifice*, holy and acceptable unto God, as our reasonable service; and be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds, proving—this, how the leaven works, how we are transformed—the good, perfect, and acceptable will of God. If we be in Christ, God dwells in us, we do his will; that is, he works in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Now, to prove his will has underlying it the imagery of the crucible with the ore, and by which the dross is purged away from the pure metal, so are we proving the will of God, in purging away all the dross of our carnal will, or earthly-mindedness.

34. These three parables set forth the Three Persons of the Godhead, graciously unfolding the covenant; and now the two following bring out more distinctly man's relation and duty in respect to it.

The Lord spake to the multitudes in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: that the words of the prophet might be fulfilled. Whereby he taught us that these things were not new, *though accounted such, but a further and fuller revelation*, for by these same truths in which we are accepted before God, were Abel and a cloud of witnesses accepted of him. God had respect unto Abel—he possessed the substance—and his offering, the outward manifestation of the truth. Abel possessed judgment and righteousness, and so obtained witness before God that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts.

This covenant the Lord established—a testimony in Jacob and a law in Israel: the former outwardly, in the whole Mosaic institution; while the latter should be the law of the Paternity, the informing Spirit of their actions. But they, though armed, and carrying bows, turned back, a stubborn and rebellious generation. They kept not the covenant of their God, and so their spirit was not steadfast with God. All this had its fearful, painful fulfilment, when the great Prophet of Israel was rejected.

The Lord Jesus now enters the house. His twelve disciples, *as twelve*, represent the purpose of God to all men; *as disciples*, those who obey it. To them he explains the parable of the Father, whom obeying they attest the two parables following.

To the multitudes the Lord gave and explained the parable of the sower. And to any one who disposes his heart according to his teaching, the same is a disciple—good ground—and to him is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom. However, to the multitudes, the work of the Father, of Christ the Son of God, and of the Holy Ghost, is given in three parables. And now, *since Christ has entered the house*—so, to his disciples is given the exposition of the parable of the Father, with two more added, which disciples only can understand.

44. The Lord keeps to his formula—the kingdom of the heavens. He is explaining the covenant of a Triune God. It is likened to a treasure hid in a field; the which when a man findeth, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

We are told that the hid treasure is the Gospel, a term most hackneyed. If we ask, what is the Gospel? the answer is, Good News. But what is good news? The Gospel, as expressing certain definite truths, is to very many a great and difficult problem. It is just what these several parables teach—a revelation of the Father in the Christ, and by the Spirit of life bestowing in us by their indwelling conditions according to God.

Man finds the hid treasure. Any man may find it, since it exists in the most common, necessary, indispensable pathway of life. He finds from the nature of it that it is so. It must be found, because it exists as the possession of all men. He finds it, because it is the good ground. Working in the field, and seeing what that work implies, that the ground must be good to

yield the fruits of increase, he is led to see the corresponding spiritual truth, that the ground must be good, that it is not of his working, but is provided of God, a hid treasure, *and that this is Christ crucified, dead, buried, and risen again*—so a pure and holy vessel for the life of God. The ground is cursed for man's sake, that he should not rest in it, but that he should subdue it. Now, every one is of the earth, earthy. Every one is made of the dust of the ground. And in subduing this—his own carnal nature—he finds the hid treasure. Ay : and he finds it in this ground, in this earthly carnal nature of his.

What, then, is the hid treasure ? It is simply Christ crucified, dead, and buried. God has gathered all into Christ. Whatever be the enmity between angels and men—and this on the score of true holiness ; whatever be the enmity between Jews and Gentiles, and this in ordinances, and so on the score of an outward holiness, the cross of Christ, in the destroying of the enmity, has reconciled all. But so long as man continues a child of disobedience, in whom the prince of the power of the air works, he is *without Christ*—he ignores the grace of God, and is an alien to the commonwealth of Israel : he is without God in the world. (Eph. ii. 12.) But if we possess Christ, even as he possesses us, for we are gathered in him, then we are made partakers of his promise, which is an inheritance—the fulness of God (Eph. i. 11 ; iii. 17—19), of which the Spirit is the earnest.

The hid treasure, then, is Christ crucified : it is *judgment*, in the condemnation of sin in the flesh ; it is *redemption*, in delivering the soul from sin, the which when a man hath found, he hideth. Having discovered this treasure, he leaps with joy—a joy that is essentially different from that spoken of in the parable of the sower. It is the result of a true deliverance—a joy with which no man can meddle ; it expresses a condition, which the other does not, since it exists not.

He hides it. It is said he does this as if he designed to possess it unknown to others, or that, conscious of many spiritual enemies, he uses such prudence as will best ensure its safety. This does not appear to be the Lord's teaching. The treasure is hid, not to be hidden. It is the good part—the one thing needful—the one fundamental principle of Christianity, of which neither man nor devil can deprive us.

He hides it. It is his own deliberate act. He must appropriate it *as it is*. He cannot in anywise alter or modify it. He must appropriate it as the hid treasure. We may speculate about the cross, the necessity of being crucified to the world, and the world to us; but if we do not appropriate that which is already effected for us, Christ hath died in vain.

For joy thereof he hides it, and he buys it *as a hid treasure*. To do this, he must purchase the field. What is the field? It is the last Adam. He *parts with* the old for this. Christ is in every man, and every man is in him. Wherefore, it is for every man to appropriate him. Like salt, what is true of the whole is true of every separate grain. The last Adam is co-extensive with human nature. Each man, then, would be as the field. But every man, through sin, is a slave. Christ is come to destroy every yoke, and to set man free. However, his idea of freedom, of self-possession may be the most fearful of all bondage. But it is in *the selling of all that he has*, and the possession of the field, that he truly realises the hid treasure. Christianity is essentially practical, and the truth is not exclusive. It does not give to the rich an advantage over the poor. A rich man may give his millions to ameliorate the condition of his fellow-man, which the poor man, from the force of circumstances, cannot. The field is not purchased by any such means. Before he is conscious of an indefeasible title to his possession, he must sell all; then possess the field, and so making effective the grace of God, he knows he possesses the hid treasure. We are dead, buried with Christ, crucified to the world, and the world to us. We have put off principalities and powers in Christ, who led captivity captive, and made a show of them openly, tying them to his own triumphal car. We, therefore, hate the ties and relations of life, yea, life itself, when they are not related to all that is eternal and true, as the shadow to the substance. Putting on Christ, we make effective the truth. "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin." In this death, we not only part with all, but we possess the field. It is redemption, and so we realise the hid treasure—Christ crucified.

45. We now have to consider its correlative truth. A merchant, seeking goodly pearls, finds one of great price. He is doing what is required of him. It belongs to his occupation, and

so he is doing according to what he is. He lacks no qualification. He truly appreciates what he seeks.

“Seeking,” instead of “finding,” expresses this side of the truth. Being in Christ, we have the true qualifications for seeking the pearl of great price, and we seek not in vain. We seek the Spirit of life, who is righteousness, for the law of the Spirit of life, and the law of righteousness are one: they are divine love. Thus, in Christ, as the hid treasure, and the Spirit of life as the pearl of great price, we have judgment and righteousness manifested in redemption and blessing—that is, holiness and love.

We cannot overrate the importance of a clear apprehension of the *distinctive* truths taught in these two parables, as in other parts of the Word of God. To jumble them together, so as to signify first one thing, then another, not only deprives us of the truth in its simplicity and power, but exhibits ignorance where knowledge should be.

Pearls are generally obtained from the deep. Divers descend before they can ascend with their precious freight. So we, possessing many goodly pearls, yea, something in common with the one pearl, that is, fulfilling the honoured and cherished relationships of life, witnessing to higher and holier in the covenant, part with all these goodly pearls for the one pearl.

Our eye being opened, we behold the glory of the Father in the Son, in whose Spirit we have the earnest of our inheritance. We enter upon life in its truest sense, with all its blessed realities, and hold it alone and intact as our very being. There is here no confusion, no mingling of earthlies and heavenlies. We can distinguish and we can separate the substance from the shadow. The Lord says, He that loveth father and mother, brother and sister, wife and children, more than me—the Son of God, in whom is our life—is not worthy of me. Our worthiness consists in the possession of the hid treasure, by which we part with goodly pearls. The relationships of life are “goodly,” because they are of God. We must not dishonour them, still we part with all through the cross, and then, possessing the pearl of great price—the *substance*, we hold the *shadow* in greater reverence and honour.

47. The seventh and last parable is as distinctive in its teaching as any of those which precede it.

The kingdom of the heavens is like unto a net, such as may be seen along the south-west coast of England, gathering of every kind. The covenant has included all. The Father, in the revelation of himself, in redeeming the world, and blessing mankind, has not overlooked one soul. His kingdom is to the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills—the whole world is his. All men are it, and when in the fulness of time the last shall appear, being embraced as he comes into the world, then will it be full. Now, all men are in the net, being redeemed, being blessed. Though they may deny the Lord that bought them, the mercy of God has encompassed them. What, then, should we be, even to all, despite their contradictions—should we not testify to the truth?

Then, when the net is full, it will be drawn to shore, and the good fish will be gathered into vessels, and the bad cast away. The adjectives rendered “good” and “bad,” might be nearer their true meaning as “beautiful” and “corrupt.” It is of little moment whether there is a peculiar fitness in such epithets in respect of in season and out of season fish, but it is when they adapt themselves to the ideas already in our minds of the great truths themselves. The good and beautiful are they who have found the pearl of great price, and manifest it alone; while the bad or corrupt are they who despise the hid treasure, the holiness of God.

The flood was an allegory of the coming end. God said, Because the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, the end of all flesh is come. “All flesh” must have included Noah and his family, just as it was afterwards said, “My covenant is with all flesh.” But should Noah and his family, when there was in that family one who despised the Paternity, be gathered into the ark, and the world perish? Noah, being warned of God of things not yet seen, which would be seen, and taking the warning according to God, built an ark to the saving of his house, *condemned the world, and became an heir of righteousness according to faith*. His outward act expressed what he was inwardly. Moreover, he revealed the Father of the spirits of all flesh.

Noah and his family in the ark, as distinct from the world, represented the covenant—separate from the flesh, and one with a Triune God. For he that cometh to God must believe that he

is I AM who putteth away all that is not of him, and rewardeth them that diligently seek him. These things were not yet seen as in Christ Jesus. Yet Noah, by outward things, showed them. His ark implied the flood—the destruction of all flesh, as it would be the refuge and rest of such as would enter. It stood 120 years; such was the testimony, for which time the Spirit of God strove with man. Apart from the three 40's, to which we have already referred, the two factors making this number intensify the idea of universality. Noah set forth the salvation of God in the presence of the Spirit, attested by the ark, and his preaching.

Noah put off the flesh, and became the heir of righteousness, of which the standing ark was the sign: to enter which implied the truth to which Noah witnessed, that the glory of the world—all that was of the creature—was destroyed. Noah was perfect in his generations: he had put off the flesh and *rested* in God, and so was partaker of the covenant.

But how is it that we find the three sons in the ark? The four men, with their wives, attest the covenant made with all flesh. And since the man is the image and glory of God, and the woman the glory of the man, it contemplates the salvation of the whole man, while all that is contrary to God is buried out of sight. It is not for any to judge another—we can judge no man. This judgment belongs to him who is Lord of the quick and dead. He, then, who lives to the flesh, is only corrupt; but he who has the hid treasure and the pearl of great price, is precious in the sight of God, and will hereafter be gathered as good into vessels. Then, without sitting in judgment on an ungodly world, or determining the hereafter of Ham or his brothers, we learn, that they who enter the ark as Noah signified, realising the invisible to which those outward things testified, are saved with an everlasting salvation; while they who despise it will perish, like all the enemies of the Lord at the bottom of the engulfing waters.

Does it not savour of the flesh to say, “God has not saved all men?” He is the Saviour of all men, however they by their lives may give the lie to it. The Word of God unveils eternal verities, to which all men are related. All the parables in this chapter attest how truly all are gathered into the net. It is not man that

makes the net: he is in it, and it rests with himself whether he is a good or a corrupt fish.

When the day of days shall come, and the everlasting separation takes place, the net will be drawn ashore. No creature will do this. The Triune God will receive into everlasting habitations those whom the Son will confess, and the corrupt will be cast away. Even now the good are blest, for they who abide in the doctrine of Christ have both the Father and the Son. Hereafter, when these are gathered into vessels, the *holy* angels will sever the *πορνητοι*—the wicked ones—from the righteous, and Jehovah will be to them a furnace of fire. Then will the holiness of God have no pity—will not spare. What, then, will it profit a man if he possess all the treasures of earth, and have not the hid treasure? Alas! for what morsels of meat do men barter away their blessed birthright. What are the honours, distinctions, glories of this world, if, after possessing all, we are cast away? Well may the righteous be sad, and mourn the folly of those who pass heedlessly along the brink of eternity, without God, and aliens to the commonwealth of Israel! How can they be saved? There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Solemn, indeed, then is the office of a fisher of men. The Gospel is the net, and it has gathered of every kind. Then it behoves every one who holds this very responsible office to know how to present every one in Christ Jesus, lest they be castaways, and he confess, I have toiled all the night and caught nothing. The stern realities of the kingdom stand out unaffected by the sectarian and party views of man: we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.

51. The Lord asks his hearers whether they understood him. It was his purpose that they should. "Have ye understood all these things?" he asks those to whom he had just before said, "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God." Nevertheless, it is so given to all *true* disciples *who have* taken his yoke. The question is put to all; but does every teacher understand the hidden mysteries of the kingdom? The Lord sows the Word—his *disciples* receive it and understand it: so he takes them according to their reply.

52. *Therefore*, every scribe instructed in the kingdom—that is, one who has made *effective*, as a true disciple, the things that are written, and so is in the kingdom of the heavens—is in it, and

possesses it as a man does a house: and out of his treasure he bringeth forth things new and old. The very term, "treasure," shows that he has made effective, and possesses the covenant of a Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And in judgment and in righteousness, the hid treasure and pearl of great price—emphatically, the treasure—he realises them. What are the things new and old? Without stopping to notice the numberless things suggested, we would simply express them by things invisible and visible. Of their mutual relation, Paul testifies where he says, the invisible things of God—his eternal power and Godhead, the hid treasure and pearl of great price—are clearly seen, being understood by things that are made. If we are in the kingdom, we are a new creation: old things pass away, all things become new. The old, the outward and visible, at the best, are shadows—impressions of the everlasting covenant. If, then, we know the covenant, the mysteries of the kingdom, we have that easy, familiar, effortless knowledge, like that which the householder has of his own treasures, and bring them forth, making the old express by their unerring laws the glorious things of the kingdom.

It is said in respect of these things, "real originality is rare. Many of us spend our time very largely in imitating, recombining, reproducing existing thought."—*Canon Liddon, Bampton Lec.* 105a. We would simply ask, is this the testimony of a scribe instructed in the kingdom? If so, then "speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee." (Job, xii. 7, 8.)

53, 54. Having made known the mysteries of the kingdom, in the revelation of Father, Son, and Spirit, it is within the power, as it is the duty and unspeakable privilege, of all to testify to the truth, whereby they are in a far higher relation to Christ Jesus than any earthly relation can express. He now enters his *own* country, and teaches the people in *their* synagogues. It is his Fatherland. What his teaching was, we have sufficient to indicate in the words of the Evangelist and the remarks of the people. As a true scribe, he would attest even what his own country, his Fatherland, suggested—the everlasting Paternity, and man's glorious inheritance. He would show how these men, in their congregations, came short of it. There is but one true congregation; all are gathered into Christ: he is the head of the body—the Church, the fulness of him that filleth all and in all. In this body, as a

vessel, is built a spiritual house for a habitation of God, by the Spirit; so that we, dwelling in Christ by faith, are filled with the fulness of God. Thus we know the Father, possess the inheritance, being in the true congregation a member of the body of Christ. (Eph. i. 10, 11, 22, 23; ii. 21, 22; and iii. 17, 19.)

While his teaching is irresistible, and those miracles he is pleased to give as parabolic signs astonish them, they cannot rise above earthly things. They have no idea of the eternal verities of heaven. They cannot so far stultify themselves as to ascribe all this wisdom and power to Satan. They ask, whence is it? And, like the teachers of the present day, they fall back upon what is literal, visible, tangible. They do not take the simple and definite teaching of Christ, and keep distinct and separate things old and new. And now, in the very graphic description of the Evangelist, we see how it is so. Jesus has revealed a Father's will; how, according to it, the Persons of the blessed Trinity have worked; and how we possess and do it, and so, being disciples, are in a relation to him far higher than mother, sister, and brother; but they yield themselves to their senses—they confer with flesh and blood, and heed not the covenant of God, and so ask, Is not this the carpenter's son? Thus, in their self-delusion, they cheat themselves. They continue saying, Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? How particular they would be! The god of this world drives them back into themselves, and they are scandalized in him. Despite his wisdom in the full setting forth of the glory of the everlasting covenant, and its manifestation in the parabolic signs he wrought, they are scandalized in him. They fail to apprehend these stern realities, because they yield to what is visible. So they have no faith—they have not the substance; and the invisible realities to which his words testify are not made effective, therefore his signs are not necessary.

Human nature is rooted and reared in prejudice. Here, in the midst of the most astounding testimony, we have an instance how the antecedent conditions, or earthly circumstances, of a man are laid hold of, and become a fearful stumbling-block. Men look at the earthen vessel, and not the heavenly treasure it contains. But it is still so that the foolish things of the world confound the wise, and things that are not bring to nought things that are. Often,

indeed, a man's own family—it may be from the strength of earthly ties, which should be a stronger testimony to heavenly—is the last to acknowledge the divine life and power. It was so with the Lord, notwithstanding the miraculous circumstance of his birth, his pure and unspotted life, his matchless wisdom and mighty works, for his own brothers and sisters failed to render him honour, in believing, while he lived with them.

CHAPTER XIV.

- 1 AT that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus, and said unto
2 his servants, This is John the Baptist ; he is risen from the dead ; and
therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him.
- 3 For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put *him* in prison
4 for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife. For John said unto him, It
5 is not lawful for thee to have her. And when he would have put him to
death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.
- 6 But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Hérodiás danced
7 before them, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to
8 give her whatsoever she would ask. And she, being before instructed of
9 her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger. And
the king was sorry : nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat
10 with him at meat, he commanded *it* to be given *her*. And he sent, and
11 beheaded John in the prison. And his head was brought in a charger, and
12 given to the damsel : and she brought *it* to her mother. And his disciples
came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.
- 13 When Jesus heard *of it*, he departed thence by ship into a desert place
apart : and when the people had heard *thereof*, they followed him on foot
out of the cities.
- 14 AND Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with
compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.
- 15 And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a
desert place, and the time is now past ; send the multitude away, that they
16 may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals. But Jesus said
17 unto them, They need not depart ; give ye them to eat. And they say
18 unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes. He said, Bring
19 them hither to me. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on
the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to
heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to *his* disciples, and the
20 disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat, and were filled : and
21 they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full. And
they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and
children.
- 22 And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to
go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.
- 23 And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain

24 apart to pray : and when the evening was come, he was there alone. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves : for the wind was contrary.

25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking
26 on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they
27 were troubled, saying, It is a spirit ; and they cried out for fear. But
straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer ; it is I ; be
28 not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me
29 come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was
30 come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But
when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid ; and beginning to sink, he
31 cried, saying, Lord, save me ! And immediately Jesus stretched forth *his*
hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore
32 didst thou doubt ? And when they were come into the ship, the wind
33 ceased. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying,
Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

34 And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Genne-
35 saret. And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they
sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that
36 were diseased ; and besought him that they might only touch the hem of
his garment : and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.

1. THE Lord declared that they who are his disciples do the will of his Father, and are in a relation to him that includes all those of earth. He taught the kingdom of the heavens, the overthrow of all adverse power, and the revelation of a Triune God, by parables from nature. Now, the kingdom of this world, the kingdom of darkness is revealed, not indeed by nature, but by man.

The truth, indispensable as preparatory to the indwelling of God, to which the Baptist as the Lord's forerunner testified, and to which David witnessed when he found the materials that his Son might build the temple, was the casting out of evil, and the consequent redemption of man. Christ is as the material, but it is the presence of Deity that constitutes the true idea of the temple.

Against the truth to which the Baptist witnessed—that is Christ crucified—the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world, does evil in all its concentrated malignity set itself. In this narrative we learn what Satan is, with all his subtle and refined antagonism to the truth. He will adopt everything that religion or

society requires, if the former can be without the cross—a *practical reality in the heart and life*. For him to adopt the cross would be the end of his kingdom; but he, knowing that he is already judged, already condemned, and that he must go, so long as the day of Christ's second advent tarries, strives to recover his lost possession and dominion, which he does, as he works in the children of disobedience.

John, as a true prophet, preached the kingdom of the heavens at hand. His preaching forced into bitter activity the kingdom that is opposed to it; for whoever is of the one, is not of the other.

Herod, like his father, the Pharaoh of the New Testament, is as the incarnation of Satan. He is a tetrarch, a ruler of a fourth part of the kingdom, which, by synecdoche, is put for the whole. This fact in Herod's life would not be mentioned, but that it signifies a fearful truth concerning *all men*. We pay tithes—a tenth, thereby signifying that we give up *all* in Christ, count *all* as dung for him, that we may possess God. Herod, then, represents Satan, having dominion over all, for all have come short of the glory of God. As truly, then, as, in the grace of God, birds of every clime, country, colour, lodge in the branches of the mustard tree, and the leaven is in the three measures of meal, so, co-extensive with the grace of God, is Satan's claim for empire over the human family. Hence the unmitigated hostility of Herod towards the Baptist.

The kingdom of Satan is revealed in Herod and Herodias. How true is the picture before us! Let us go back to the revealed past. The Father has two sons—angels and men; the elder to serve the younger. Man, therefore, came into this world with a twofold nature—the dust of the earth, and the divine inspiration; the former to serve the latter. So man, the glory of God, and woman, the glory of the man, must, in their relation, remember the will of the Father. Woman, therefore, is subject in all things, because of the angels. Herodias is the wife of Philip, and in her obedience to the law of her husband, would maintain creation's and redemption's order. But man's brother has seduced and debauched his wife—that is, the flesh. It is thus degraded and debased. Grasping this truth, let us hold it fast; whatever else may be predicated, let us not be hampered by any apparent contradiction. And now, what is the union before us? Does it not

represent man—the corrupt nature, in all its depravity, united to sin ; for the glory of God is departed. Further, this corrupt nature in the kingdom of Satan is permitted to have unrestrained and unlimited power ; so that the carnal nature is here pictured as worse than the devil himself. Herod had cast John into prison for Herodias' sake. Let a man preach the kingdom, *in the cross of Christ*, the crucifixion of the old Adam, and it arouses all the malignity of hell. He would have put him to death, but he feared the people. *Herodias has no such fear*. Devils tremble, man does not. Well may the prophet write, “the heart of man is *deceitful above all things*, and desperately wicked ; who can know it ? ” This depraved nature begets only its own. The daughter is as her mother. That which is of the flesh, is flesh. What a contrast ! There are two covenants—one with God, the other with sin and darkness—and every man belongs to the one or the other.

Seeing, then, what things are, let us not be deceived by the hypocritical demeanour of the world around us. The antagonism of sin, the enmity of the carnal mind, underlie the refined proprieties of social life, and which, ever and anon, reveal themselves, that they may be recognised. Let us not be deceived by the lauded refinements of intellect, religion, or taste.

We have here simply the flesh in its indulgences, gratification, and pleasure. The old Adam supplants the last Adam. He, then, who knows not this, lives in that, and makes the best of this world ; as the Apostle says, “ Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.” But he who knows the last Adam, knows also that, so long as he is bound by this chain, ay, to the end of his course, the old Adam will rise up, and as an adversary seek to draw him away from the true centre of all life. We have here all that is in the world, in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—the birthday into this world with its gratifications and carnal delights, and with all the relations of life ; but since the one Father is not known, they are perverted and dishonoured. Herod would, doubtless, observe the outward decencies of religion, for he had regard to those with him, when, for his oath's sake, he refused not what he had before hesitated to do. More, he understood the Baptist's teaching in a death to sin, that we might rise to newness of life, since he saw no impossibility in the Baptist himself rising and doing *mighty* works.

And, lastly, in the pride of life we see him using unlimited power. Not only is he king, but he despises and kills, but does not overcome, the faithful herald of the kingdom of God.

Alas ! man may discharge the amenities of social life, yet be ignorant of the fearful condition of his own heart in relation to the covenant of God.

12. The disciples honoured their Master. They bury the mutilated body of the Baptist. The enemy has done his utmost. But God makes the wrath of man and of devils to praise him. No sooner do the disciples tell the Lord Jesus, than he departs by ship *into a desert place* apart. How tender ! how touching ! how gracious is the act of the Lord ! He makes the Baptist most truly seal his testimony *in his death*. While he lived, none born of woman was greater than he. And so in his death and burial. This the Lord confirmed in his own distinct act. A sign is the expression of the reality. But the fulfilling of the sign is in the reality itself. *So the Lord departed into a desert place apart*. Having done this, we may suppose that he there lifted up his soul in prayer. We are bound to do so. But Matthew does not here mention this, for the sake of the prominent truth attested by Christ and the Baptist, as the reality and the sign ; namely, a death and burial to sin, which alone meets the condition of all men, however under the power and dominion of the devil.

Multitudes now follow him *into this desert place*. They are one with him. He has, as the scape-goat, borne away the sin of the world. He has been tempted and tried in all points like we are. His compassions, therefore, fail not. He knows our necessities, and though we are sick, have departed from him, even according to the deceitfulness of our own hearts, yet he heals us : yea, has healed all. Thus, what is true of himself and the Baptist is true of all. If, then, the Gospel net has gathered all into Christ, it rests with every man whether he is of the kingdom of the heavens, or of the kingdom of the Evil One.

The disciples of John had borne witness to their Master *in burying the body*—the truth to which the Baptist witnessed. Now it is for the disciples of Christ to bear witness to their Master. They unwittingly take up the truth, but only in its outward sign. At evening, when the sun was gone down, they say, "It is a desert place, and the time is now past ; send the

multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals." The "desert place," and "victuals," suggest the two spiritual truths which the Word of God reveals as meeting the necessities of men. They would send the multitude away. As yet they understood not; they understood not their great Master. And so all who understand not Christ, do send them away; and so, instead of freely giving what they have freely received, they lead men to buy that which does not profit, and they perish. God, in his abundant provision—for all things are now ready—has fully met the need of all men, and he who knows the redemption of Jehovah, partakes of it. Instead, then, of sending away those who had followed Christ *in the desert place*, who were dead with Christ, and so in a holy separation from sin, the world, and the flesh, they realising this *should, out of the inexhaustible fulness of God, have filled them*.

The Lord rebukes them, saying, "They need not depart." They who gather not with him, scatter: "Give ye them to eat." He is not telling them to work a miracle; but he is telling them, and through them us, how that it is within the power of all who claim to be disciples, and *à fortiori* prophets, to supply the wants of men.

17. They say unto him, "We have here but five loaves, and two fishes:" they are enough. As Jews, they already possess them. The five signifies the Pentateuch—the books of the covenant, revealing redemption and God in the midst of men. To know the Lord God, is to know that he hath redeemed us out of Egypt, that he might dwell among us. (Exod. xxix. 45, 46.) The five loaves are not limited to the Pentateuch, but extend to the whole Word of God. Man lives not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Bread is thus the outward symbol of the Word; and so, emphatically, of him who is the Word, the Covenant. The two fishes represent the two principles of the covenant, which are discoverable in every part of the Word, and which are revealed in Christ Jesus—expressed by circumcision and the Sabbath, the paschal feast and the feast of weeks, or by baptism and the Eucharist—the putting off of the flesh, and the partaking of a new and better life.

We need not, then, the after-thoughts of men: we need not the fathers, or the mother-church, to teach us: we have the five

loaves and two fishes ; and if we are true scribes, we can meet the spiritual wants of all men. If we fail to magnify our office, we depend on man ; but if we do magnify it, we, in the power of Christ, cast down all that is of self, and, being taught of the Spirit, as we receive we give.

We have, then, the five loaves and two fishes ; and if we lift up the Son of man, we shall not scatter, but draw, all men unto him.

18, 19. "Bring them hither to me," says the Lord. This is what all are to do. He commanded the multitudes to sit down. He now reveals the purpose of God. The Word is blessed, and, broken up, it feeds. So must the sheep of Christ be fed. With the broken bread the two fishes are consumed ; and so we are one with the principles of the kingdom, set forth by the hid treasure and pearl of great price.

It is the Word—that only which proceeds out of the mouth of God—that is the Word of life. The tendency of the age is to literalism—it is death. *Men err, not knowing the Scriptures and the power of God.* Again, how many pervert the Scriptures to serve their own party views, and so destroy its marvellous simplicity ; and, having recourse to the conceited systems and traditions of men, they rob them of their unshared supremacy.

The Lord blessed the loaves. The Word, being blessed, has the power of multiplying itself. When God blessed man, it was that he should multiply and replenish the earth. It is more blessed to give than to receive. So Jesus the Son of the Blessed is the last Adam : he hath the Word of eternal life. Let us take this ground, and then, as we break up the Word of life, life is begotten to the glory of God : it accomplishes that whereunto it was sent. So all men are made partakers of the blessing, and are filled with the fulness of God. The five thousand men, with women and children, who did eat, were the Jews : as the *five* thousand, they possessed the oracles of God ; yet there are the crumbs for the Gentiles. The *twelve* baskets teach the same truth as the *twelve* disciples—that the blessings of the covenant are for all, and, being full, there is a gracious intimation that they are as precious as they who did eat and were full. God is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe. They who have the oracles, and did eat, represent those who make

effective their salvation—who have faith. God is no respecter of persons. In the outward relations of this life, one may be a vessel of honour, another of dishonour; but they are all one with the Father of all. But, if they knew not how to feed the five thousand, how shall they the four? If they knew not how to break up the five loaves, how shall they the seven?

22. Jesus has again instructed his disciples as scribes into the kingdom: through them he instructs all, throughout all time; but they fail to spiritually apprehend his teaching. He now constrains them to go before him in a ship. Why constrain them to get into a ship? As fishermen, they would get into one; but as disciples, they are constrained to enter into Christ Jesus: as such they go forth. *The love of Christ constraineth us*; for we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all died, that they who live should henceforth not live unto themselves, *but unto him* who died for them, and rose again. He, then, who goes forth to unfurl the banner of the cross, will meet with things contrary; but with what effect? Now, what difficulty is comparable with that of not being able, with the five loaves and two fishes, to feed the Church of God? of not being able, rightly, to divide the Word of truth? and who is able, if he, in every step of his way, finds difficulties in it? Can such be called scribes duly instructed into the kingdom of the heavens?

The Lord now teaches how it is that difficulties prevail: he sends the multitudes away, but not until they are filled with the Spirit—*perfected* in the blessings of the covenant, to fight the good fight of faith. Having sent them away, he goes up into a mountain apart to pray. To ascend the holy mountain, and to delight oneself in the house of prayer, is the experience of him who lays hold of the covenant. (Is. lvi. 7.) If, then, the multitudes were filled, and dismissed by Jesus, they were so dismissed as spiritually experiencing what the *outward act* of the Lord signified. The Lord Jesus did not pray for himself; he thereby signified *what* he is doing by his Spirit in the hearts of all *who are filled*. Men ought always to pray, and not to faint; for, being delivered, set free from their former union with the old Adam, they ever find him reviving and springing up and troubling them. They have put off that condition—represented by Herod and Herodias—of the carnal nature, being one with

sin. So prayer goes forth, that they may be kept from their old nature, which is ever their adversary.

When evening was come, he was there alone; the Word reveals this for our abundant consolation. Darkness is the hour of the Evil One: he is then busy. Then is the Spirit ready and willing: he supplicates in us. But which do we prefer—indifference and sleep, or watching unto prayer? What Jesus is on the mount, so is he in us; we are with him *separated unto holiness*, or we resist him. The Word, then, reveals how men are redeemed and blessed, and how they, in their need, freely partake of the blessings of the covenant,—all which is also signified of the disciples being in the ship. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. What, then, is this that is contrary, and so hinders our progress? Is it not our predilections and prejudices? and is it not so with those who find difficulties, and are unable to feed the Church of God? Their hearts being not yet established with grace, they are tossed to and fro. Satan is ever busy—to corrupt the Word from its simplicity and power, as taught in this miracle of the loaves, is the one desire of the enemy. During the hours of darkness—symbolical of their condition, mentally and spiritually,—Satan is busy; but *in the fourth* watch, when, *to all*, the Sun of righteousness rises with healing in his wings—being the covenant *to all*, Jesus manifests himself. How little the disciples had realised him is evident, for, when he is walking on the sea, he, as the true ship, surmounts all that is contrary, so that no wind, no storm, impedes his progress. They cry out for fear; they fear when they ought to rejoice.

27. Jesus spake unto them. He would that they should know him who had redeemed them, and who was with them, that they might not fear.

28. The answer of Peter showed wherein they feared, whence their ignorance: they lacked faith in his Word. They possessed not the substance of things hoped for. Christ did not dwell in their hearts *by faith*. Had they made effective the truth of God, it would have been in the demonstration of the presence of Jesus. In his unbelief he asks for a sign. It is vouchsafed him, that he may be humbled—"If it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water!"

29. And he said, "Come." Peter comes out of the ship. He now trusts in an outward sign, and *an outward* knowledge of his Master. He would know him after the flesh. Peter walked on the water: so far he obeyed the Word, and was one with his Master. This is what he should have experienced in the ship, but his heart was not established with grace. But when he saw the wind boisterous—as with us, when difficulties multiply, perils increase, temptations are strong, and trials severe, if we be not more firmly established, we lose our vantage ground—he, being without Christ, began to sink, and cries, "Lord, save me!" He who goes forth to save others, must take care that he is established in the truth, else he is sure to make shipwreck of his faith.

31. The Lord is ever the same. He stretched forth his redeeming hand, but he reproved his servant for being without faith, doubting his Word, doubting the reality revealed.

32. Now they come into the ship. Peter, and they with him, have learned Christ, and so the wind ceases. They now know how to surmount the difficulties which otherwise were insuperable, and so they can feed others.

33. Having thus far grasped the truth of being in the ship, in Christ, they testify to its correlative—both set forth by the broken bread and it blessed—and now they exclaim, not "Lord, save me!" but, being saved, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God." This is true worship. In vain do we worship *the Father*, teaching for commandments the doctrines of men. But if we believe, we are filled with the Spirit of the Father, the Spirit of the Son. Abiding in Christ, we have both the Father and the Son.

34. They now go forth to feed multitudes. They come to Gennesaret, and there, when the men had knowledge of him, they did what the disciples should have done with the loaves and fishes—they seek out from all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased. What can be more expressive, when the men had knowledge of him? The Lord had no need here to say, "It is I." No; they knew that there was in him all that met the necessities of all men; and they sought all that had need, and they brought them to him. And they besought him, that they might only touch the hem of his garment. They know what they require: they have faith to lay hold of the covenant, to be one with it. The touch is the symbol of union, of oneness,

of the putting on of Christ the Son of God. And thus multitudes are fed. If we know the Son of man, and the deep wants of man, we know what to seek—we know how to bring men to Christ, and how to obtain. As many as touched were made perfectly whole. They had not only Christ, but also the Spirit of the Son. Peter cried, Lord, save me, and Jesus *laid hold* of him. Here the men of Gennesaret sought out every poor object, all out of the way, all ignorant of a mighty salvation, and desired only that they might *but touch* the hem of his garment; and they that touched were saved thoroughly—were effectively saved, made perfectly whole, according to the everlasting covenant.

CHAPTER XV.

1 THEN came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem,
2 saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for
3 they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and
said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by
4 your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and
mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.
5 But ye say, Whosoever shall say to *his* father or *his* mother, *It is* a gift, by
6 whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; and honour not his father or
his mother, *he shall be free*. Thus have ye made the commandment of
7 God of none effect by your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias pro-
8 phesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth,
9 and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me. But in
vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of
men.

10 And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and under-
11 stand: not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that
which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.

12 Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the
13 Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? But he answered
and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall
14 be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And
if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

15 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable.
16 And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye
17 yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the
18 belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out
19 of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For
out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications,
20 thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are *the things* which defile a man:
but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.

21 THEN Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and
22 Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and
cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, *thou* son of David;
23 my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a
word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away;

24 for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto
25 the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him
26 saying, Lord, help me ! But he answered and said, It is not meet to take
27 the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord :
28 yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then
Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great *is* thy faith : be it unto
thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very
hour.

29 AND Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee ;
30 and went up into a mountain, and sat down there. And great multitudes
came unto him, having with them *those that were* lame, blind, dumb,
maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet ; and he
31 healed them : insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the
dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to
see : and they glorified the God of Israel.

32 Then Jesus called his disciples *unto him*, and said, I have compassion on
the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have
nothing to eat : and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in
33 the way. And his disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so much
34 bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude ? And Jesus saith
unto them, How many loaves have ye ? And they said, Seven, and a few
35 little fishes. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground.
36 And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake
37 *them*, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And
they did all eat, and were filled : and they took up of the broken *meat* that
38 was left seven baskets full. And they that did eat were four thousand men,
beside women and children.

39 And he sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coasts
of Magdala.

1. THE Lord Jesus came to reveal the Father, whose will was the law of his Sonship. Accordingly, he unfolds the covenant in the seven parables contained in chap. xiii. Therein he teaches, attested by created things, how men should walk. Herod, taking his brother's wife, represents Satan destroying the relation according to the covenant, and so striking at the Paternity itself. Thus, on the one hand is the kingdom of the heavens, on the other, the kingdom of the Evil One. So the Lord Jesus, as a true scribe—as one instructed into the kingdom of the heavens—puts away all that is of the old Adam. He retires from the world, and on the holy mountain pours out his soul in prayer. To put the world under our feet, to count all as dung, and to let the true life go

forth, is the will of the Father towards all men; and, accordingly, the twelve baskets of fragments, and the men of Gennesaret, bore witness.

A circumstance now gives occasion for bringing into stronger relief the truth itself. It is for all men to appropriate it—to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man, to be one with him, of which touching the hem of the garment was the symbol. To this gracious purpose of the Father, sin, though clothed in the garment of a sanctimonious demeanour, is antagonistic. The scribes and Pharisees come from Jerusalem—from the mother-city; men claiming to be the interpreters of the law, and others to be the impersonation of holiness,—come to Jesus. The Lord's disciples have been taught, according to the covenant, to put off the old Adam, to be renewed in the spirit of their minds, and to put on the new man, created after God in holiness and in righteousness. But the scribes and Pharisees ignore this, and murmur, because they transgress the traditions of the elders. "They eat bread with unwashen hands." Had these words a spiritual import, the objection might have been valid; for as yet they did not understand the five loaves and the feeding of the five thousand, much less the twelve baskets of fragments, and the touching of the hem of the garment of the Son of man. Even, as the Lord said to Peter, Except I wash your feet, you have *no part* in me. Whatever be the ground of these men, we are not to draw the distinction between "the traditionary exposition and the Scripture text itself," but between the visible and invisible. The withered hand was healed, that it might appropriate the ears of corn; the disciples, as such, were washed, that they might take the bread of life; the people touched the hem of *the garment of Christ, as having put him on*, that they might have life in its truest form.

When thus the truth is possessed and established within—when we have *learned Christ*, and are sealed with the Spirit, waiting the redemption of the purchased possession—then all outward and visible acts and signs, symbols of the true, are the outcoming, the expression of a condition within. So, all the miracles of the Lord were parabolic expressions of the true, as in himself. But hypocrisy is failing the inward and true, yet exhibiting the outward, which is no better than grapes on thorns, or figs on

thistles—for there is no connexion between the outward fruit and the inner life. Hence the detestation with which hypocrisy is regarded by the Holy One of God. And there can be no extenuation where men profess to detest hypocrisy, for they may feel this detestation in respect of earthly things, which is naturally planted in the heart, yet without the least regard for spiritual. Nor is there in saying, “We may be called hypocritical, for no Christian on earth altogether lives up to his profession.”—*J. H. Newman, Sermons*, Vol. I. p. 139. In the former case, a man is self-condemned, for he is no less a hypocrite when he would determine all things *by his own* standard of right and wrong; whereas, in the latter, he is confessedly one, as he would appear under the outward habit of spiritual life what he is not. Thus, the commandment of God is not only ignored, but transgressed, by their traditions. The command to the Son of man is to lay down his life, and take it again. If thus we are to honour and reveal the Father, it must be in the exercise of a holy love; and this cannot be until we have *put on Christ*, in whom we lay down our life, and take it again in the Spirit of the Son, according to the everlasting covenant.

4. If, then, we rest in the text or letter of Scripture, which is only outward, we shall be hypocrites; for it is possible for the outward man to conform to the outward letter. But if we perceive the invisible and spiritual, all that is outward is renounced. We have nothing to do with the letter, any more than with the old Adam, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts, and which is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. The commandment referred to belongs to the earthly relation, yet it is symbolical of the great central truth of the covenant, around which all other truths gather.

Now, if we do not honour our parents, we curse them. And the Lord says we do so, even when we say to our father or our mother, “It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me.” Or, as is rendered by some, “That from which thou mightest have been benefited by me is an offering (consecrated to God).” We do not, we cannot honour them in the flesh, since the carnal mind is enmity to the law of God. It cannot, therefore, be subject to it. There may be an outward honouring of them, according to the letter and the requirements

of society; but it is only when we honour the Father of all, in the true sense, by the indwelling of the Son of God, and so, according to the law of that relation—when thus we honour him in the Beloved, we can honour our parents. Honouring the substance, we honour the shadow. But if we honour not the Father of all, and *according to the everlasting covenant* in Christ Jesus, we trample the life of it under foot, we do despite to the Spirit of grace, we are in that condition that curses God—that curses the reality and the shadow. So long as the old Adam is not put off, though it may enrobe itself with all that is apparently religious,—“in the ordinances of righteousness, in taking delight in approaching to God, and in seeking him daily”—it is *only* the flesh. Can any gift of the natural heart, though devoted to a religious object, be substituted for the law of another *and better nature*, possessed in the Spirit in Christ Jesus?

What the Lord here enforces is the connexion of the outward act with its true spring or source. He takes the highest possible type, which may be said to include all others. Touching this “Corban,” in the righteousness of the outward law, it may be said, in respect of it, “He is blameless.” Now there are but two sources or springs of action, God and Sin—the last Adam and the old. And we see here the fearful deceivableness of sin, as it clothes itself in a sanctimonious garb, recognises the paternal relation, and makes an offering as a witness to it.

The Word of God recognises these earthly relationships as warm and living symbols of the great truth, and as such they are more eloquent than all the outward forms of godliness; yet it demands, by the revelation of the Son of man, of all to stand in the blessed privileges of the true adoption, and honour the Father in all the activities of a holy and never-failing love. But how can they do this unless their hearts are brought nigh by the attractive power of his love, having first put away all uncleanness in the true washing—in Christ? Of this God will have a witness, lest he smite the earth with a curse (Mal. iv. 6), found, indeed, not in the cold garb of a religious profession, nor in the more attractive folds of philosophy, but in the hallowed relationships of life. For where there may be no Christianity, there may be found these living symbols, which are always far better than a dead formalism, being ever eloquent of the truth, speaking out in

the most intelligible way to every man, in every grade, and in every part of the world, of the fundamental truth of all heavenly and earthly blessings—the everlasting Paternity of God.

But what is the fact? Amid the feverish excitement of the age our tendencies are only outward. Take the great social organism of the day, and we ask, with all its laws, institutions, customs, conventionalisms, does it meet the wants of man? Does it fathom the deep necessities of his being? Does it afford him happiness, or minister to his well-being? Could every particular want created, suggested, or devised, and met by social progress, afford happiness, when it is well known that fresh desires and beliefs arise, larger and stronger, as the product of what we have done before? What shall meet the numberless varieties of sentiment and opinion which govern the human family? Can it be from without? Is there any fixed principle on which human well-being and social progress can be based? Shall we look to the opinions and conventionalisms of the hour?—to philosophy, with its singular developments?—to the increase of virtue, in order to receive the good so abundantly bestowed? Is it that man must first create something that shall reach forth to the depths of the human heart? Or is the commandment of God sufficient? Men are indeed being led astray by tendencies which are adverse to that simple truth which supplies the need of all men. They partake of the bounties of an everlasting Father, not with unwashed hands, but with unwashed hearts. That which is partial is only Pharisaism, it is selfish, it would make the Father such as itself. And so, while they would honour him with their lips, their hearts are far from him.

If we would come to Jesus, *we first come to Christ*. We first know the Son of David, before we know the Son of Abraham, who reveals the Father, and lays bare the deep relations that lie below all the arrangements of life, “and so reveals men in one common brotherhood, with the same higher and lower instincts, demanding each from the other”—*in the cross of Christ*—“the surrender of what is individual for the common weal.”

10. The Lord called the multitudes, and said to them, “Hear, and understand.” By these terms, as in the teaching of the parables and miracles of the two preceding chapters, he would intimate not only that it is within the power of all to hear and

understand, but that he was about to give a striking parabolic teaching. "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man," &c. It is subject to the law and process of nature—all that is necessary to the nourishment of the blood is taken up, the rest is rejected. So all the glory of man, all that is of the flesh, is only as dung; and the Apostle says, "*Forgetting the things which are behind*, I press forward to the calling of God from on high." What, then, comes forth from the mouth, though it be the glory of man, defileth him. No creature of God entering the mouth can defile a man. But evil, which is in man, coming forth from him, he is defiled.

12. The Pharisees are offended—they are scandalised, they reject the Christ. He had given them a striking parable, one that meets them continually. They might require a washing before eating, but that, like all the ceremonies of an effete religion, was only outward. Nature, in her unchanging laws in the sustentation of life, brings the truth nearer man. Doubtless they perceived the fitness, and felt the power of that teaching which came of One built up into the kingdom of God. They may not have seen the corresponding spiritual truth, but they did see a deeper teaching, analogically, than their own. Paul, when he had learned the truth as it is in Jesus, conferred not with flesh and blood, but counted all things, all the glory of this world, only as dung. He could see in it nothing but the filth of the flesh. He desired to win Christ, and be found in him. And he could not win him but by striving, and striving lawfully. But these men, rejecting the Son of man, put from them the covenant, revealed in the books of the law, in their own nation, and in the Christ the Son of God. We are called to follow God as dear children, that in Christ we might be unto him an offering *of a sweet smelling savour*. (Eph. v. 1, 2.)

13. Though these men rejected their redemption, their true washing, Jesus testified to it, and to the blessing of the true life, saying, "Every plant, which my *heavenly* Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." The *ὁ οὐρανός* implies the putting away of all that is of the world, of this life. Even the highest type of worldly morality is not of the Father, but is of the world.

14. "Let them alone," says Jesus, for if we cannot set forth the truth, it is better to let them alone. Ignorance will not

serve the truth of God. But if we do know it, then are we to ignore all false teachers, and let the truth itself vindicate its unshared supremacy. So the Lord Jesus brings forth parable after parable to illustrate it—the casting away of the filth of the flesh and the plant of the Father's planting, which, receiving light, gives it forth to the whole body. However, these self-complacent seers are only blind guides, and they bring those who follow them to the same end—they both fall into the pit.

It is futile to attempt to uproot persistent religious prejudices. A life crucified to the world, and a ceaseless watching against the outcoming of the natural heart, is the privilege but of few. The grace of God has abounded to all men; else, what is the meaning of *blind* teachers? And how is it that others are at the mercy of such? The Lord has already taught that it is within the power of every one hearing the Word, to present the good ground; hearing, to understand. So to see if he will, and not to be led by those who make void *the* commandment of God; for no outward act, no work of the old Adam, can possibly be substituted for honouring the name of our heavenly Father in partaking of the blessings of the covenant.

15. Peter may have believed that he honoured the Father, that his heart was not far off; that, distinguished by some outward gift or position, he had therein a proof that all was right. But he asks the Lord to declare to them the parable. They all were ignorant of what it meant. Perhaps, after a fruitless endeavour to explain it, Peter was urged by the others to ask the Lord. But they are rebuked, and placed in the same category with the scribes and Pharisees, as the Lord says, "Are ye *also* yet without understanding?" They did not understand the truth before them. They could not follow the consecutive truths in the Lord's teaching. Guesses at truth do not satisfy the deep wants of the soul. Then what is the parable? As the blind eye is contrary to nature, so are they who are not of the heavenly Father's planting, they are contrary to the grace of God.

The blind eye cannot receive light. The lid is not only closed, but disease prevents it and the eye from fulfilling the purpose of God respecting them. The eye represents the soul, the lid the flesh, and the disease possessing them prevents them obeying the law of nature—the lifting, so *the hiding*, or putting off of the lid

that the eye may receive light in all its fulness. Thus, man may extol man, may cultivate and discipline his own nature, and then it is only flesh subject to evil. He is blind, and leads those only who are blind.

The Lord Jesus has set forth the kingdom of the heavens according to the covenant, also a kingdom of evil. He has taught that a scribe instructed into the former, will bring forth out of his treasure things new and old. Then, when the multitudes follow him, it was for his disciples, as true scribes, as seeing and not blind, to feed them, to give them of the bread of life; but it was the diseased, who felt their need and who followed him, that knew how to take it, as they touched the hem of the garment of the Son of man. The scribes and Pharisees—the world's model men, claimed to be the scribes of the kingdom, and imposed the traditions of men; and so, they made void the commandment of God—the covenant in all its fulness. If the outward world with its laws, to which man is crucified, is the old, and the kingdom of the heavens, the new, and so the outward forms of an effete religion are now as if they had never been—are blotted out—then, what are the traditions of men worth? The Lord Jesus shows how baneful the traditions of men are; and how useless, when Nature, with her constant and unerring laws, calls *all* men to the truth. He testifies, not only to her, but also to the grace of God in his heavenly Father's planting. But these men, these pattern, these model men, are blind leaders of the blind. They cannot see, they cannot enter the kingdom; for they know not the old Adam. Did men know the testimony of Nature, as they ate bread, even with unwashed hands, how she witnesses to the five loaves which feed thousands, they would not be blind. How many glibly quote the words of Paul, "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing," yet see not the importance of the death of Christ, the death of the old Adam, a reality within demonstrated in the life? and, therefore, hesitate to read themselves in the fearful description which the Lord here gives. In plain language he describes the old Adam, the inheritance of all men: be they the highly esteemed among men, or the abandoned outcasts. He explains by the most common and simple fact in the course of nature, and which is within the power of all to understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth

into the belly, and is *cast out* into the draught. Thus he teaches how there must be the purging of *all* meats that life may be manifested. It is the law of life, and whatever is foreign to it, must be voided or eliminated. Most of our ailments may be found to be the result of living to eat, rather than of eating to live. If, then, we partake of the bread of life—if we eat of the five loaves, there must be a purging of the heart, a cleansing from all its abominations, that is, of *the old nature itself*, that new life may come forth.

18. But those things which come forth from the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. Whatever, then, savours of *man* is an abomination before God. All that is of the flesh must be put away; for until the heart is cleansed, it is far off from God. How else can it be a clean and holy vessel, for the Father to beget in it that everlasting life which he never ceases to nourish and to tend? It may be asked, Are these men who are so rigid in their observances as to require the utmost cleanliness in eating, who enforce the obligation to help indigent parents, who instruct men in the doctrines of religion, who are philanthropists and philosophers, who ever toil to draw from nature her hidden secrets—are all these to be placed in the same category with those from whom proceed the abominations mentioned here? Such abominations, indeed, shock society: they are the outcoming of what is within; they attest the inward condition of all men who have not learned Christ—put him on, and known him living in them. And whether there be, or not, these outcomings, if the heart be not cleansed, they are all one, whatever be the outward circumstances, or accidents of life.* These abominations, then, not only attest the uncleanness of the heart of all men, and *that every man may in them read and understand himself* and what he is, but they also parabolically teach the inward condition. These, enumerated by the Lord, are forbidden in the second table of the law to which he has already referred. The heart being unclean, the divine love cannot be

* “What are we to say or think of the state of our civilization when this catalogue of savage crimes is contained in a single morning’s news? . . . It is abundantly evident that the most brutal and ferocious passions still rage in our midst; that we have not extirpated the wild beasts of the human heart; and that, with all our progress and social improvement, the radical vices of human nature are unaltered.”—*Times*, Sept. 29, 1869.

there, which sets us free from the law of sin and death, and by which every obligation of the Decalogue is fulfilled. Men may draw their lines of separation, but the Word of God has but one, even that which the cross alone draws. Paul addressing the highest type of religious form, says, "Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? "Will a man rob God?" Yet ye have robbed me. (Mal. iii. 8.) A son honoureth a father: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? (Mal. i. 6.) "Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery?" Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith Jehovah. (Jer iii. 20.) Again, "Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?" Behold, ye have spoken vanity, and seen lies, therefore, behold, I am against you, saith the Lord God; because they have seduced my people, saying, peace and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and lo! others daubed it with untempered mortar—they polluted the offering of the Lord—they defiled the temple, they realised not its glory, the gift of the Father to all men.

21. We now come to one of the most instructive incidents in the Bible, and which, amid the universal unbelief, must have been most acceptable to the Redeemer. As we behold Herod with his court, the educated and self-righteous scribes and Pharisees, and the highly privileged disciples, and how all kept down the truth in unrighteousness, this incident stands out in strong relief, illustrating and confirming all that goes before.

In order clearly to understand this miracle, or parable, we must not forget that, as in the centurion and his servant, the paralytic borne of four, or the woman with the issue and the daughter of Jairus, this Canaanitish woman and her daughter were one—not, indeed, by the test of misery, or the influence of sympathy, but for the sake of the truth itself. At the same time, as separate, they maintain the relation of parent and child, which underlies the whole narrative.

It is one of the many instances which illustrate the truth that the revelation of the Father in the Son is vouchsafed, not to the learned and prudent, but to those who come under a deep sense of their need, being burdened and heavy laden with sin. Taking, then, these two—mother and daughter—as one, we see a heart

filled with every abomination, far off from the Father; yet, honouring him and drawing nigh in the one only way, according to the five loaves and two fishes.

Matthew speaks of her as a woman of Canaan, one of an accursed race, doomed to destruction, and total excision. He well knew that the Jews—redeemed and blessed—were prohibited making with the Canaanites any league or peace, connexion or communication by friendship or marriage, but were commanded to cut them off, to extirpate them root and branch; and if any remained they would be thorns in their sides, and snares in their path, because Ham, their progenitor, dishonoured his father. His descendants, then, were *the representatives of all who dishonour their heavenly Father*, and were, therefore, outwardly accursed of God, and destitute of any lot, part, or inheritance in the promised land. We here understand the condition of human nature, and why it is accursed of God. As a Canaanite, then, she was most expressive of a heart unclean, far off from God. On the other hand, the Jews were to witness to the Paternity. They were redeemed and blessed, not because they were the most numerous and most pious of all people, for they were the fewest, and it is very evident, from the Mosaic code, that they were the most demoralized, but because the Father loved them. To the love of the Father *to all men* they were to witness. God will have a witness, at least, outwardly, else he will smite the earth with a curse. And so, whether in the cursing of the Gentiles, or in the blessing of the Jews, there is a witness to his Paternity.

Here, in the teaching of this parabolic sign, the doctrine of particular election is fully negatived, while that of a universal predestination to the place of adoption is established.

She comes in behalf of her child, who is grievously tormented with a devil. Merging the child in the mother, we have the condition of one possessed, grievously tormented, coming to the Lord.

There is a truth suggested by the term daughter forced upon us by the context. It is a term for the people of a country: as the daughter of Tyre, the daughter of Jerusalem, who is all glorious within, and whose garment is of wrought gold. (Ps. xlv. 10-13.) The Jewish nation—the daughter of Jerusalem, *the king's daughter*—as all glorious within, should have so witnessed to the truth; but it was full of all abomination and uncleanness. The daughter,

grievously tormented, however, represents the condition of all men, though God be a Father. It is man's condition by nature; for out of the heart proceeds every abomination; and one grievously tormented would signify a clear exhibition of that condition. We cannot overlook another truth in the relation of parent and child. The mother, in behalf of her child, honours the parental relation. That tender, pure, and unalloyed love of a daughter, but faintly shadows forth the never-failing love of the everlasting Father for the daughter of his covenant. A mother may forget her sucking child, but I, says Jehovah, will not forget thee. She thus testifies to the redeeming, seeking, and all-embracing love of the Father, who would not that one should perish, but be restored and honour him.

To return; she comes to Jesus, saying, "Have mercy on *me*, O Lord, thou Son of David." Conscious of her separation from the Father—conscious that she is a Canaanite, and that she possesses a nature which can give forth every abomination, and which cannot be made better, but must be cast off—she comes to the Son of David, and addresses him as Lord. She addresses him as Melchizedek—King and Righteousness—as this, he is Jehovah: she addresses him as the incarnate God. She comes to him now in the day of his power: she seeks an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God. (Eph. v. 5.) She counts all things as dung, that she may win Christ, and be found in him, and have the righteousness which is of God. (Phil. iii. 9.) She cries for mercy: not that mercy which we hear supplicated under acute suffering or a painful visitation—nor that which we sometimes hear painfully implored on the brink of eternity by those entering upon the untrodden future—but that mentioned by the Lord to his enemies (chap. ix. 13). Mercy is redemption, deliverance from sin, and all the power of the devil. He will have mercy, and the knowledge of God. (Hosea. vi. 6.) The Jews, failing here, brought upon themselves his sore judgments. And now, here they might learn mercy, for the redeeming arm of Jehovah was not shortened: his hand is ever against evil. She cried for mercy of the Son of David—in other words, that he would be enthroned upon her heart and Satan cast out; that the filial relation might be restored, and so she would be brought nigh to her everlasting Father, and honour him.

23. He answered her not a word. She is come to him, but he acts according to her mighty faith, which testifies to his Melchizedekian character. Her experience is that of thousands who so come. She has a deep sense of sin and its oppressive power—a sense of the withdrawal of the light of the Father's countenance, so that all things appear against her; nevertheless, she sees the One sent of the Father, who should bring forth judgment unto the Gentiles—judgment unto victory.

She rests in the Word—in the five loaves and the two fishes—and turns to the disciples to give her to eat that she may be filled. What should they have done? Should they not have told her to hold on, and she could not perish? Had they not been in the ship and found the wind contrary, and then to cease? If we are resting in the realities revealed, however evil may work within to beget doubt and distrust, we must not forsake our confidence. But *they understood not these things*: they would send her away, but she did hold on, despite of them. They, who possess the five loaves and two fishes—who possess the revealed covenant and its two eternal principles—ought to know how to meet the condition of the most wretched outcast. But how often is such sent away, because they know not the Scriptures and the power of God!

They do not tell her to depart, but would that Jesus should dismiss her. He replies, "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." How characteristic of the Lord, who would lead men out of themselves, and then those who obey and know him, into deeper truths of his kingdom. Does not this reply of his include all men? The Jewish nation represents the world in relation to the covenant. Jesus, then, being sent to redeem and to restore all lost, cannot pass over this one. He gave his disciples an opportunity to express a true faith in the Father, in whom all the nations of the earth are blessed. It was, then, for the disciples to have stood on the ground of the covenant, and to have sought from him, whom the Father had sealed, the mercy craved. Yea, more—to have given it, as Peter afterwards did, to the one *impotent* from his mother's womb. "Silver and gold have I none," he said; "but such as I have give I unto thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

25. She now comes to Jesus, and *worshipped him*, saying, "Lord,

help me." She heard his words and understood them: they were to her words of encouragement. He was the Sent of God—the true pool of Siloam—the one fountain open for sin and all uncleanness. And as the One sent of God, he existed before he took flesh. Thus, unhampered and unfettered by the traditions and doctrines of men, she receives the commandment of the Father, and honours him. She who had been far off, is now brought nigh in the truth revealed. Though possessing a nature—the common nature of all men—unclean, there was for her bread, Christ, and he crucified: the true bread come down from heaven, sent of God, sealed by the Father, given for the life of the world.

26. The Lord now answers her, saying, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. Jews and Gentiles are vessels of honour and of dishonour. There are dogs before there are children. Children are born to the desolate one, before there are children of the married wife. Desolate cities are to be inhabited: therefore is she who was barren—who did not bear—to break forth into singing, to sing aloud. The five loaves are for the children of Israel, for the purpose of the Father does not contemplate any rejecting him. Thus, making no distinction, it anticipates the obedience of all men. Yet if there be any as lost, they are as dogs. The bread, then, is for all men, specially them who partake of it. The Word of life is for all men, specially them who hear and understand. She receives the Word, and understands it; her faith unveils her simple apprehension of what is. "Truth, Lord," she says: "yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table." They must eat of them, if they would be children. Who are the masters, from whose table the crumbs fall? In a great house there are vessels of honour and of dishonour. God is a Father, and the universe is his house: in this house, Jews and Gentiles were vessels of honour and of dishonour. So, in the providence of God, some men may have an honourable position, while others have one that is dishonourable. One man is a white and free man, the other a black and a slave. While thus she testified to the outward arrangements of a perfect providence to subserve the truth, she bears her testimony to the one bread for all. She rose above the prejudices of an exclusive caste, such as Peter cherished and held fast until he had the vision and received the reproof from the Lord and his blindness

gave place to sight, as he exclaimed, I *perceive* that God is no respecter of persons; but, *in every nation*, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him. There were twelve baskets of fragments after the five thousand had eaten. They who have eaten of the five loaves have overcome sin, the world, and the flesh—they truly are masters, for they overcome as Christ overcame; while they who are yet grievously tormented by Satan, are slaves. She would partake of these fragments, according to the everlasting covenant; therefore she cannot but realise what is. What, then, should the Redeemer say? What would be the utterance of his joyful heart, when he found one, burdened and heavy laden, taking his yoke and learning of him? He had rebuked his own followers in the reproof addressed to the chief—“O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?” And now calmly surveying the multitude, the scribes and Pharisees, yea, and his own disciples, he says, as he beholds the inner life of this one whom the disciples would have sent away, “O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee as thou wilt.” Heaven’s richest blessings can be entrusted to her. According to thy will, which is, *that all that keeps her heart far off from her heavenly Father may be cast out, that it may be cleansed from all its filthiness*, and her soul united in the bonds of the everlasting covenant, and bring forth fruit unto God. And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

Let us be careful that we do not demur to this woman’s faith. If the Lord has been pleased to call it “great,” we cannot—because of our puny faith, which may be no faith at all—disparage it. If we have a great faith, we shall recognise it in her, who, free from all exclusiveness, attests the Father of many nations, as she fully embraced the great salvation, and honoured him in the manifestation of that which fully met her necessities. And we may here learn, that we must not treat with supercilious contempt, as the generality of mankind do, those on whom the outward providences of God may not have smiled, since they may rise superior to their untoward circumstances, and therein prove a mightier faith than can be possessed by those who enjoy great privileges and advantages.

How, then, are we to regard this woman’s faith with respect to ourselves? It is a great faith. Though of an accursed race,

dwelling on the confines of that nation which was highly privileged and favoured of God, and in contrast with the great teachers of it, she comes to Jesus. She fastens upon the truth that God is a Father, and that all men are children—that he is no respecter of persons; for she, the most degraded of the children of men, seeks to be brought nigh to him, not with the lips only, but with the heart. In this belief she confesses to the common nature of all men, *from which all must be delivered*. Not only, then, does she confess a Father, and the depraved nature of man, but, coming to Jesus as Melchizedek for the bread of life—according to the parabolic teaching of the Lord—she would possess him that, in him and through him, she might cast away all that is of man, and possess only that which is of the Father. Possessing the fundamental truths of the covenant, unfettered by the diverse doctrines and practices of different parties and sects, superior to the prejudices and traditions of men, she embraced the mind of God, and so possessed the mind that was in Christ Jesus.

29. We are now led to the contemplation of a truth, which not only confirms all that has gone before, but encourages us to take this woman's ground: it is indeed the Gospel.

When we consider how the covenant ignores time, and that the ministry of Jesus is proleptical, and so confirms the promise of God to the fathers unto their children—for it assumes his death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and sitting at God's right hand—we cannot fail to see the import of the simple facts recorded in this verse.

He departs thence: such a departure was his death and burial. He comes nigh unto the sea of Galilee, and went up into a mountain: there he gave an infallible proof of his resurrection. He thus foreshadowed the accomplishment of his work. He said to his disciples, After I am risen again, I will go before thee into Galilee (chap. xxvi. 32), and they went away into Galilee, unto a mountain, where Jesus had appointed them (chap. xxviii. 16); where, doubtless, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, and in his glorified body, when some believed, and some doubted. He is now seated on the mount of his glory, at the Father's right hand: he is not far from any one of us—he is accessible to all, in their deep necessity. And, in the faith of the great multitudes, as they cast all manner of

diseased persons at his feet, we see how we, knowing our true condition, may, with the same assurance, cast ourselves at his footstool. This attitude is one attesting the power of the Son of David, who will not, for his own name's sake, fail to meet our necessity.

31. The multitude wondered when they saw the result of coming to Jesus, who is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins to all who come to him. It was, indeed, to every one—"Be it unto thee, even as thou wilt." It is thus that we enter into all the full blessings of the covenant.

32. If we fail to take the Word unfettered by traditionary opinions, and to follow the connected ideas in what is revealed, we shall say, "There is very little that might be said upon this miracle which the preceding one, of the same nature, has anticipated already."

The written Word—the law, which the Jews possessed, has its fulfilment in Christ, the Son of David. The Gospel, as the full blessing of the covenant, has its fulfilment in the Spirit of the Son: the one a ministry of death—death to sin; the other of life—life to God. Though these are the prominent characteristics of the two dispensations, *relatively*, yet the life to God is implied in the former, as death to sin is in the latter—so, respecting the Sabbath, the sign of the covenant in the law twice given. It was to be observed, because God *rested* on the seventh day, *redemption* being then an accomplished fact—a reality, with them. Afterwards, when about to enter the land *of rest*, their inheritance, then before them, they were to observe it because they *were redeemed* out of Egypt. So, also, respecting the Sacraments: Baptism is the expression, or seal, of a death and burial with Christ, whereby the body is dead because of sin—yet such have the Spirit; while the Eucharist is a thank-offering for the inestimable blessing of the Father in the Spirit of the Son—the full blessing of the covenant; yet such show forth the Lord's death till he come. Such is the relation in which the two miracles of the loaves, in their parabolic teaching, stand each to the other. In the one, Jesus blessed and gave the bread, as broken (κλασας, attributively); in the other, he brake and gave it, giving thanks (ευχαριστας) for the blessing of the covenant.

The connexion and relative order of these miracles, as they attest the two distinct principles of the covenant according to Christ and the Spirit respectively, may be intimated by the significant act of the Lord Jesus looking up into heaven, as recorded in the former miracle, but omitted here in this. The eye is the symbol of the soul, into which, *if we be not blinded* by the god of this world, the glory of the Father shines. But Jesus put away the works of the devil—of which the four loaves were a witness—that we might in him be filled with the fulness of God. Thus he intimates how, according to the five loaves and the seven loaves, we have, of the Father, Christ and the Spirit; and that, if we have the former, we have the latter.

He calls his disciples; he tells them that he has compassion on the multitude, because *they have been with him THREE days*, and have nothing to eat. They have learned the mercy of the Son of David, even as Paul did, when he, for three days and three nights, was without sight, neither did eat nor drink. Therefore, his heart yearns for them; yea, for all men, for all have died with him. Hence it is within the power of every man to realise the mercy of the Son of David, that he may have the bread of life. He will not send them away fasting. Did the Canaanite obtain the mercy of the Son of David?—then the devil was cast out, and she partook of her heavenly Father's blessing. If there be any difficulty in the mind, about where free will comes in, go and study the woman of Canaan. The covenant stands; the Saviour's heart yearns towards every man. Let him then, in Christ, put away the flesh, which is unclean, and he will be filled with the fulness of God.

33. The reply of the disciples is remarkable. They understood not; they see not the relation in which these things stand each to the other: they do not now say, "Send them to buy victuals, for the place is desert;" but, "Whence should *we* have so much bread as to *fill* so great a multitude?" This is the difficulty with many, "How can all men possess Christ, and so possess the Spirit of the Son of God?"

34. Jesus knew; but for our sake, and the truth's sake, he asks, "How many loaves have you?" "Seven, and a few little fishes." What are these *seven* loaves? They express the covenant *in its fulness and completeness*. This they have for multi-

tudes—yea, for all men—and what more can they have? They have him whom the Father hath sealed, not only as the Son of David, but also as the Son of Abraham. But they understood not until he had ascended the true mount, which cannot be touched—and was most high in the glory of God the Father—how to give of the everlasting covenant. A few small fishes are mentioned. In the former miracle of the loaves, respecting the fish, the number was the salient or prominent truth, for the sake of the *two* distinctive principles of the covenant, of which the former was Christ the Son of David, to whom the five loaves, in their relation to the seven, particularly referred. But here the number is omitted. Then, what are we to understand by these few small fishes in relation to the seven loaves—to the covenant, *in its completeness*? but that we, partaking of the seven, partaking of the covenant in Christ, the Son of the living God—as true disciples—experience the truth; not as a single instance, but as *an oft* refreshing from the presence of the Lord; for we are saved by the washing of regeneration, and *the renewing of the Holy Ghost*.

37. They did all eat, and were filled: and they took of the broken fragments seven baskets full. The twelve baskets full signify what God *has done* for all men in the death of Christ; wherefore should all, like the Canaanitish woman, realise the mercy of the Son of David. Then will they seek the blessing of the covenant, *possess its fulness*, be perfect in the Spirit of the Son, to which the seven baskets full witness. These seven baskets full are a guarantee of the mercy and love of God.

The names of the baskets are *κοφίνοι* and *σπυρίδες*. The Lord, in a subsequent reference, notes the distinction. The former were used for carrying provisions; the latter, being larger, were used, on special occasions, as some think, to sleep in, when staying or travelling in the desert. The careful observance of these synonyms, with regard to the two miracles, indicates a fitness in their use respectively. The former miracle signifies the putting off of the flesh in Christ, the Son of David—a fasting according to the three days. Thus, in Christ, as the true body, *of which we are members*, there is here the receptacle for the bread of life. Then we find *in him*, the Son of the living God, the true rest for our souls.

38. And they that did eat were four thousand men, besides women and children. Thus, as before, the exact number of mouths that were filled is not given—the object being, to force into prominent notice the mystic number. As the four—the radical number—expresses all creation, and as the seven, the fulness of the covenant, we read, in these numbers, how that the blessing of grace, *in all its fulness*, is for *all* men.

39. Having filled the multitudes, and sent them away, he took ship, and came to Magdala.

There is something strikingly graphic in this simple and tersely written statement. After the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus is seen walking on the tossed sea. Peter comes, like a poor sinner tormented of the devil. He comes to him as the Christ, the Son of David, *or represents one so coming*, but he doubts. The Canaanitish woman comes, and doubts not. Peter is of little or no faith, but she is of great faith. The whole scene sets forth the work of the true David; and when he enters the ship, the wind ceased. Now, after the feeding of the four thousand, with the seven loaves, Jesus, the Son of God, enters the ship. The ship, possessing him, is as the seven baskets of fragments, the possession of all men. And so he comes to a place, of which it can only be said, Its name is carried into *all languages*, bearing witness to the grace of God—to one under all the power of the devil.

CHAPTER XVI.



1 THE Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him
2 that he would show them a sign from heaven. He answered and said unto
them, When it is evening, ye say, *It will be fair weather* : for the sky is
3 red. And in the morning, *It will be foul weather to-day* : for the sky is
red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky ; but
4 can ye not *discern* the signs of the times ? A wicked and adulterous generation
seeketh after a sign ; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but
the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.

5 AND when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten
6 to take bread. Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the
7 leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. And they reasoned among
8 themselves, saying, *It is because we have taken no bread.* Which when
Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye
9 among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread ? Do ye not yet
understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how
10 many baskets ye took up ? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand,
11 and how many baskets ye took up ? How is it that ye do not understand
that I spake *it* not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the
12 leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees ? Then understood they how
that he bade *them* not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of
the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

13 WHEN Jesus came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his
14 disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am ? And
they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist : some, Elias ; and
15 others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom
16 say ye that I am ? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the
17 Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto
him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona : for flesh and blood hath not revealed
18 *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee,
That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church ; and the
19 gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the
keys of the kingdom of heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth
shall be bound in heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall
20 be loosed in heaven. Then charged he his disciples that they should tell
no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

21 FROM that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that
he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief
22 priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then
Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee,
23 Lord : this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter,
Get thee behind me, Satan : thou art an offence unto me : for thou savourest
not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.
24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let
25 him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever
will save his life shall lose it : and whosoever will lose his life for my sake
26 shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world
and lose his own soul ? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?
27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels,
28 and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say
unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till
they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

1 THE Pharisees and Sadducees now come to Jesus. They lay aside their mutual hatred in a common enmity to the principles set forth in the preceding chapters. They are one against the Christ, the Son of God. The Pharisees, in a separatism which is not of God, reject the Christ. The Sadducees, denying the resurrection, deny the Son of God.

The Lord's greatest enemies were found among the orthodox of his day. The truth he inculcated cuts at the root of all human conceit and fancied uprightness, and so aroused their bitter enmity. They come, tempting him. They come, in all the subtlety of the archfiend. They admit his signs, but they would have one from heaven. They would satisfy that nature which is an abomination before God—they would satisfy their senses. It is the heart, possessed of Satan, and in all the deceivableness of sin. They had seen signs, which they could not gainsay. Now, they would see one from heaven.

Whatever definition may be given to the term miracle—σημειον, it is a sign. And the Lord shows that providence and the laws of nature are but signs.

It is not on the working of these signs, however they may attest the presence of Deity, that Christianity is established. It rests not on them. It was in the truth itself, to which they witnessed, that men believed. When the apostles went forth, the

Lord went with them, working these signs, *confirming the Word*, which believers, in themselves, now do, even as all nature does, for it is the Word that reveals the kingdom, and signs are only the outward expressions of it.

2. So the Lord corrected the vulgar idea respecting the manna, saying, "Moses gave you not that bread from heaven, but my Father giveth the true bread from heaven." The manna taught the same truth that the feeding of the four thousand with the seven loaves did—that the Father had redeemed them unto himself, and was in the midst blessing them with himself; even as they were taught, after the slaying of the first-born, a sign of the sin of the world being taken away, that the eating of the lamb, with its accompaniments, was the expression of partaking of the true Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.

The Lord's words are full of the deepest significance. He ever found in nature that which would eloquently and powerfully express the truth. They wanted a sign: they have had signs, but will not understand them. They misunderstood nature's ordinary laws, because they would see in them only that which is outward and visible. Men will not understand how all things around them, animate and inanimate, are testifying, to learned and ignorant, to rich and poor, old and young, the things of the kingdom of the heavens.

The Lord, in his reply, refers to the two divisions of time. If the Sabbath was made for man, so were the evening and the morning. One of God's witnesses to his covenant is the alternation of day and night, which shall not cease. So Nature speaks: and you, Pharisees and Sadducees, as you read the face of heaven, say, It will be fair weather, when the evening is red—a pledge of the rising sun, in his glorious apparel, coming forth, and travelling in the greatness of his strength, pouring forth light over the whole face of the earth: and in the morning—in the dispensation of light—because it is red and lowering, so hiding the sun, that it will be foul weather to-day. God has given, in a dark dispensation, sign after sign of the coming of the Sun of righteousness; and now that light is come into the world, men interpose the dark cloud of sin, rather than follow the light of the world, and not see darkness.

They could, on the very face of heaven, read an oft-repeating

law, but, as a sign of another kingdom, they would not. They would be religious in what was outward; they wash their hands before they eat bread, they rightly discern the signs on the face of heaven, but they are, themselves, only hypocrites.

Let us not be deceived—a religion that ministers to, or is dependent on the senses, is not of God. It is of the traditions of men, and an abomination before the Holy One of Israel.

4. They are a *sinful* generation; they are under the power and dominion of Satan, and so they rob the Father of his honour. They are an *adulterous* generation, for, as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have they departed from their God. To this they are spiritually blind, and want a sign. Did the woman of Canaan seek a sign? Did she not rather, in the full conviction of what was true, realise and experience a power by which she surmounted the greatest obstacles. When she came, in all the deep sense of sin, the Lord was pleased to restrain himself, and the disciples would have sent her away. She is outside the visible church, and she is grievously tormented of the devil. Did she then want a sign? Half-hearted Christianity wants a sign. She knows of mercy, because she knows her need. And she knows where to find it, even in the Son of David, so that it is done to her according to her will. It was her will that Satan should be cast out, and it is done. It is, in truth, the Father's will that all should enjoy the blessing of adoption. However, to this generation there is but one sign given. It is the sign of Jonas. A true faith is not the believing of signs, but the embracing of the truths they express. If, then, we fail to understand these, we must go back to that one only sign given, that of Jonas, which points to the crucifixion, which must be a reality in us, as alone meeting the condition—sinful and adulterous. Of all signs, that of the crucifixion was the most stupendous. Receive it, and the resurrection of the whole human family, in the Son of God, is embraced. For what law is not suspended? What law is not inverted? Yea, what law, according to our finite idea of law, is not annihilated, when the Holy One of God is made sin? when the Prince of life tastes death for every man. All that fearful scene on Calvary—the mocking reproach, the unparalleled cruelty, the death and the grave, was only a sign: Christ on the cross, Christ buried, only a sign,

which a sinful and adulterous generation had. Who can tell what the reality was?—what that death was which drew from the Redeemer's lips the mysterious cry of the crucifixion Psalm. Who can tell what the reality of becoming sin was? becoming a curse? treading the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God? of that mighty conflict when sin was destroyed? Yet around this sign have men raised their figments of doctrine and of merit, making void the commandment of God.

Many give to children pictures of the crucified One. If they taught them one act of self-denial, and showed it, for Christ's sake—that is, in him, and through him—they would teach more of Christ crucified than could be taught by any number of pictures. It is not by outward signs, but by beginning with what might be found within, that we can help men to put away a sinful and adulterous generation.

And he left them, and departed. He, who came to the most degraded because of sin, leaves the hypocrite. He abhors the form of godliness, without the power. There is no condition more despicable than that which professes the truth, yet repels it.

5. We have had set before us a perfect standard of life; the utter depravity of the human heart; and how anything short of that standard, however approved of man, is only a carnal separation. It is not of God according to Christ, but of man. It would be a mistake to suppose that that which the Pharisees adopted was not the highest type of a symbolical religion. Remarkable are the words of Jehovah, who looks into the heart, knows the thoughts, and judges the motives of men. "They seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of righteousness: they take delight in approaching to God." (Is. lviii. 2.) As the Lord Jesus says, "They draw near with their lips, while their heart is far from me." They break the law in putting off the true circumcision in Christ, who is the fulfilment, the reality, of which the outward was but the shadow. (Rom. ii. 17—23.)

And so deceptive is that teaching, that Jesus bids his followers to take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees. It is a warning against a supercilious contempt of external influences. Nothing can be more mischievous than a trust in the unscrip-

tural doctrine of indefectibility, or to think that we can go into the way of temptation with impunity. Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees : for it assimilates to itself all that it touches. It is easy enough to denounce Pharisaism and Sadduceeism, yet be completely under the influence of both. The one is a religious attitude, that dispenses with Christ crucified ; the other, a sceptical intellectualism as the greatest aim of man. Whereas, with all the discipline of the body and cultivation of the intellect, they are only sinful and adulterous.

7. They reasoned among themselves : they are perplexed. They do not, they cannot, perceive the broad line of demarcation between the truth and its counterfeit. They say it is because we have taken no bread. The absurdity of this inference plainly shows their obtuseness of spiritual things. Failing to apprehend the truth according to the spiritual sense, they take the literal.

8. The Lord witnesses against them, saying, " O ye of little faith." Can anything be more humbling ? They had heard him say to the Canaanite, who had not the privileges of the Jews, " O woman, great is thy faith." " Why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread ? " Notwithstanding the warning, they perceived not how near was that leaven—yea, it was already working in them, for they were using the Word according to men and not according to the Spirit of God, which separates the soul from God, making the heart far off from him.

9, 10. Do ye not understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up ? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up ? The law revealed Christ the Son of David, and they who received and obeyed the oracles of God were clean through the Word. And as the five loaves were eaten, it revealed Christ in them ; for without him they were not clean. And the twelve attested how that this was for all men. Then, the seven loaves were the covenant, *in the fulness* of its blessings, for all men ; and seven baskets witnessed how that it continued in all its fulness for all. Since they understood not the spiritual import of these miracles—and they did not, since they understood not their carnal bondage—the Lord speaks to them as not remembering them at all, although they may have remembered the literal facts, as their reply intimates.

In the reproof, "O ye of little faith," the Lord shows that his words have a spiritual signification, and that we must have a spiritual discernment to know them.

12. Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Lord could see the two extremes to which men would go. Secularism may reject the Word altogether, but a formal religion and an intellectual religion are incalculably mischievous. Men, while observing a formal religion, believe the fundamental truths of Christianity; so do they at the other extreme, as if a mental acquiescence in historical and religious truths was faith. Whereas, faith is the substance possessed—even as the bread was eaten and incorporated—putting away the evil and imparting life, and so manifested in the life according to Christ Jesus.

13. The simple and easy way in which the truth itself is here introduced, stamps its veracity. The Lord Jesus leaves Magdala and comes to Cæsarea Philippi. He is now about to teach his disciples through the perfect providence of God. He leaves Magdala. What did he there, but draw out the evil—the hard heart of unbelief—not only in the Pharisees and Sadducees, but also in his own disciples, who considered not the miracles, for their hearts *were hardened*. He now comes to a place bearing the name of a mighty king. *Here* he would help them forward to the consideration of the truths he had recently taught them, as he asks, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

14. Who can rightly estimate the importance of those who would teach true doctrine, knowing and understanding what they teach and whereof they affirm? How different are the ideas of the person and work of the Son of man is evident by the answer given by the disciples. But the Lord puts it to the conscience of every minister—"Whom say ye that I am?"

16. Simon Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The truth he enunciated is that to which all Scripture testifies, and which alone meets the deepest needs of man. The order of the names is remarkable: Simon is his carnal name; Peter, his spiritual. In Christ he puts off the former, and so is a *stone* of the true temple. In the Son of God he is a *living* stone. The Lord immediately replies, "Blessed art thou, Simon

Bar-jona : for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." The Lord's reply is a corroboration of Peter's confession. It shows how truly he had confessed to the five loaves and the seven loaves, according to Christ, the Son of the living God—that *he had put off flesh and blood, and that the Spirit of the Father had spoken in him*. So, if we confess to the Son of man, this must be our condition. And the Lord here incidentally teaches that "Son of man" is his covenant name, and is identical with Peter's confession.

18. And I—the Christ, the Son of the living God—say unto you, that thou art Peter. What constituted him Peter—not Simon Peter, but Peter? Is it not that he has, as blessed of his heavenly Father, faith—possesses the Christ, and possesses the Son of God? Upon this rock—not upon Peter; nor upon Peter's faith; nor upon Christ alone; nor upon the Son of God alone; but upon Christ the Son of God—the one foundation laid, is the Church of the living God built : *living* stones upon a *living* stone. (1 Peter ii. 4, 5.) Peter—citing the words of Jehovah-Elohim, by Isaiah xxviii. 16—says, Behold, I lay in Sion—a mount that cannot be touched—a chief corner-stone, a *sure* foundation. *Judgment*, also, will I lay to the line, and *righteousness* to the plummet : thus will it be laid with judgment and with righteousness. These things, which be of God, characterize the true rock, as found only in Christ the Son of the living God. If, then, we are built upon this foundation stone, it is in the possession of this judgment and of this righteousness, possessed in Christ Jesus, to whom, coming as a living stone, we also as living stones, says Peter, are built up a spiritual house, even the house of God, which is the Church. The spiritual house, from its foundation, develops itself. He who is the foundation stone is the corner-stone; in whom, as Paul says, the whole building, fitly framed together, *groweth* up to a holy temple in the Lord.

How can it be said that "the growth of the Church is the development of the human race?"—*Essays and Reviews*, 15. What is the development of the human race, but the development of the depraved nature, of Antichrist? Whereas the Church is the development of the covenant—of Christ, the Son of the living God, of the last Adam, of all that is holy and righteous. Holiness becometh thine house for ever. The Church of God is the unfolding

of him who is the head, into the perfect man which is the body ; of him who is given a covenant to the people ; for the Father has gathered all things into one — into Christ, both which are in heaven and in earth, even into him : *in whom* we are made partakers of the fulness of God.

It is said, "The Roman Church develops into the papacy, simply because a head was wanted, and no better one could be found." It is man's religion—the religion of the world—which begins with self. Thus the Church of Rome adopted a course of life which was made an article of faith, and which must be bolstered up by the figment of infallibility : hence Œcumenical Councils. All religion that is not of the truth, is one with Romanism. We may protest against its errors, reject its head : what then, if we are resting in the traditions and doctrines of men, in schemes and systems of religion ? These are not the development of truth, but the outcoming of man. They may take the right foundation ; but, since they ignore *Christ crucified*, in its proper order and place, they begin with man, and build the house of wood, hay, and stubble, instead of gold, silver, and precious stones, for the indwelling glory of God. The spiritual house must be raised, as Peter also teaches, of living stones upon a living stone ; even as the Lord teaches throughout chap. xxii. : where, having confuted his enemies, he asks them, even as he has just asked his disciples, What think ye of Christ ? Whose Son is he ? Upon this rock he builds his Church : the foundation is laid. Then let every man take care how he builds thereupon ; for his work and himself will be tried by fire—even the holiness of God.

Against this Church, the gates of Hades shall not prevail. The gates of death, and the grave ; the gates of the unseen world, where the soul is awaiting its glorious destiny, shall not prevent the accomplishment of that for which it was created. We would not be uncovered. Our desire is not to pass into Hades—the unseen state—but to possess the tabernacle which is in heaven, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. But if we are uncovered, and pass into this Hades, then it shall not prevail ; for the soul, unrestrained, shall enter into the full blessing of the liberty of the glory of the children of God.

19. And I will give unto you the keys of the kingdom of the

heavens—the keys of the covenant—Christ, the Son of the living God. These are the two keys. In him we have judgment and righteousness. Possessing him, we are in the kingdom; we have entered by the keys: there is no other way. The Word of God reveals to us these keys: “Except ye be born *from above*—born of water and the Spirit—ye cannot *enter* the kingdom of God.” (John iii. 3, 5.) The keys belong to no office, but to the truth itself. (Mark ix. 28, 29.) Every scribe instructed, built up into the kingdom of the heavens, knows what they are, and how to use them. Every living stone, then, possesses the keys, and he is to use them. And he has this encouragement, “Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” We are thus exhorted and encouraged to stand on the high vantage ground of the truth. Do we possess the truth, and are we able to bind and to loose? Is the prince of this world judged?—then, shall we not bind him? Is the soul of man redeemed?—then, shall we not loose it? God has given to no man power to judge his fellow-man; for he is no respecter of persons: more, he sent Jesus into the world, not to judge it, but to save it.

He, and he alone, the lowly and the meek, will hereafter judge the immortal spirit. To no man does God give power or authority to pardon sins: from the nature of things he cannot. It results simply from obeying the truth; for there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. In this name are the two keys; by the one we bind, by the other we loose. We bind the strong man, and break every yoke (Is. lviii. 6); we loose the soul, that it may obey the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Rom. viii. 2); and this is *essentially* the nature of the Church.

The ministerial office is the outward manifestation of the invisible Church; and they who use the keys go forth in the name of Christ, the Son of the living God—they possess him. Thus Paul, exhorting Timothy, says, “Keep the deposit entrusted to thee.” He possessed the Word of life; he could keep it only by living it, and proclaiming it in the form of life and health-giving words. And he warns him against profane babbling, and oppositions of knowledge, falsely so called.

20. They were to tell no man that he was the Christ. Had

he not given them the keys? and is not this the key of knowledge? (Luke xi. 52.)

The Lord does not leave us in doubt, nor the truth obscured, but proceeds to explain what is the rock, and how the Church is built upon it. If men will be his disciples, they must bear their testimony, witness a good confession; but it must be only in the way the truth demands. Why is the injunction, then, laid upon the apostles not to tell men that he was the Christ? The Word reveals him, and how that he is known only as an inward experience. The Church is so one with the Rock, that the apostle describes it in this most emphatic manner: "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. This is a great mystery: I speak concerning Christ and his Church." (Eph. v. 30, 32.) Though they had known him after the flesh, henceforth they were so to know him no more, but to carry his cross, and come after him. They were to be living stones, to reveal the Christ, casting down all that was not of the Father, not from the lip, but from the heart. (Gal. iii. 1.)

If God has cleansed the world, no man can be called common or unclean: such is the Church of God, having neither spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing. The grace of God, which bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared. Then it is for all men to obey the truth, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of their life. No clique, party, or sect, is the Church of God. Such cuts itself off from it.

The twelve attested what the twelve tribes of Israel, or the twelve sons of the patriarchs, witnessed—that the Church of God is universal. Yet man has the awful prerogative of excommunicating himself. The twelve disciples may have been puffed up by their privileged relation to the Lord; yea, more, by his statement in respect of the confession; yet, after all—for they may call him Lord, Lord, and do many wonderful works in his name—be in themselves far off from him, only workers of iniquity.

21. From that time forth *began* Jesus to show unto his disciples, &c. When we consider how the Lord himself, and his forerunner, had taught the Christ, we are inclined to ask, Why this particular statement? The Lord had evoked a confession to his own person, and he confirmed it by speaking of himself as the Christ. Now he begins to bear witness to the truth,

which he, as the Christ, reveals ; while it is the Father himself who attests his Sonship. As the Christ, he must die, and be buried, and rise again. His resurrection was a witness to his death and burial, whereby he put away sin, and everything that opposed itself to the knowledge of the Father.

22. Peter is blessed. He is so only with the Spirit of the Father, having put off flesh and blood in Christ. And so he testified to the Christ, the Son of the living God. His words should be, not only the outward representation of the truth, *but the expression of the reality*, which is the purpose of the blessing ; for Christ is come, and the Spirit is poured out upon all flesh : therefore, not the expression of the life, but of the heart. Hence the Lord Jesus enforced the obligation not to tell any man that he was the Christ. It was not to be an outward knowledge. But Peter does not yet understand : none of them as yet understood the Christ. They do not yet understand their own hearts—how from it every abomination proceeds : they have not the faith of the Canaanite woman.

The Lord was tempted by his enemies in the garb of religion ; now he is by his friends in the form of the truth : a more subtle form than when Satan, as an angel of light, appeared to Eve. Here we behold the heart of man—the old Adam, in all the deceitfulness of unrighteousness.

Peter had not yet realised what his name signified ; and on hearing the Lord's explanation of the Christ, he, in all the warmth *of human friendship and affection*, says, "Be gracious to thyself : this shall not be unto thee." He began to rebuke the Christ, but he was checked in the beginning. Let temptation come from whatever quarter, and through whatever channel, it must be checked at the beginning. What is here *outwardly* revealed takes place in the inner man—in him who is truly blessed of the Father, for his adversary, the old Adam, is ever rising up and troubling him. It does not signify what, in the impetuosity of his nature, Peter might have done ; that is not the question. He did enough ; his words expressed the true condition of his heart—how that, as yet, it was in opposition to the Christ : though blessed of the Father, he was yet far off from him. What was he not urging upon the Lord ? Was it not to deny the Christ ? to deny himself ? to annihilate his own Sonship ? and so to destroy the Paternity of

God? Such is, indeed, the very purpose of Satan, and which in every act of his he now assails, even through our adoption of sons. The misery of mankind is the universal and unceasing testimony to this. What, then, was the act of Peter but the whole temptation over again, but in a still more subtle form. Before this fact let the figment of Peter's infallibility crumble.

The words of Peter are the form of the lie which is now universal, and which, in ten thousand forms, expresses itself, "Be gracious unto thyself." Anything but the cross. Satan says, "Ask for the Spirit of the Father, but do not put off the old Adam; if you do, I am cast out, and tormented before the time." He will not know Christ, as Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord? I know not the Lord: I will not let Israel go." Has Peter the keys? Does he know how to use them—to bind and to loose?

The application of all this to ourselves is surely evident. We cannot fail to identify ourselves in the conduct of Peter. Indeed, we may discipline the body in a religious asceticism, or abstinence from worldly pleasures. We may be able, with the lips, to bear testimony to all concerning the Christ, the Son of God, yet our hearts be strangers to him—far off from him. The Lord here, in addressing Peter, does not in anywise qualify the fact, much less modify the truth. Then, if we are not wholly in Christ, we are under the full power of the enemy. "If the light which is in us, be *any part* dark, the whole is dark; and if the light be darkness, how great is that darkness."

23. 'The Lord Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me Satan." (Chap. xv. 22; and xvii. 15.) If Christ crucified, casting out the unclean, be not within, Satan reigns. It is the heart that dishonours the Father. This Jesus kept steadily before the disciples, for it possesses him who would destroy the Paternity. It is the heart out of which every abomination proceeds.

There are words still more momentous in the rebuke of Jesus. "Thou art my scandal." The blessed Redeemer trembled to drink the cup that would make him, the Holy One of God, sin, which would deprive him of the light of his Father's countenance. And, now, man, whose nature he had taken in order to redeem him, in whom he has a cherished friendship, a beloved brotherhood, is one with Satan to withdraw him from doing the will of the everlasting Father. So identified is he with man, that he,

who professes to be his disciple, a living stone, possessing the keys, having power to bind, yet not having realised Christ crucified within, is his scandal, not only in not entering the kingdom by the key of knowledge, but hindering those who are entering, and so tempting them, the body of Christ, to deny itself.

Can we, then, mistake to whom these words were addressed? Were they not to Peter? and to him as a man? Nothing can be clearer, "Thou savourest not the things which be of God." And what are these? Are they not the two essential truths to which he had confessed—the Christ, the Son of the living God, as his Christ and his Lord? (Acts ii. 36.) His heart failed here. It was far off. He is no living stone. He is still Simon. He savoured of the things which be of man. Man and Satan are one. Here the Lord teaches, that he who is not with him is against him: that he who has not Christ, is possessed of Satan; and, that man, being brought nigh in the covenant, has greater power than Satan in his direct attacks to tempt and to grieve him; yea, he has made him a rock of offence, a stone of stumbling, instead of the true rock—the precious stone of Zion—to others.

Christ rebukes Satan, saying, *Get behind me*. This must always be the place of Satan, and of the old Adam. As Paul says, I forget the things which are behind, being crucified to the world, and the world to me. I press forward to the prize of the calling of God from on high *in Christ Jesus*.

If we are one with Christ, the Son of the living God, if we know Christ, and live him, Satan is behind; for if we are not in Christ, trampling under foot every enemy, and led by the Spirit of God, we are led captive by Satan.

The Lord has placed the chief among the twelve, lifted up with spiritual pride, in the lowest place. Does he now come, like the Canaanite woman, to the Son of David for mercy? No: he is not conscious of his true condition; nor does any of them feel their need of the Christ of God, who now turns, and says to his disciples, Whosoever wills to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross *and follow me*. What self-negation, self-oblivion, does not the truth require? Well might Peter afterwards write, Humble thyself under *the mighty hand* of God, and he will exalt you in due season. It is death to exalt self.

Yea, we may deny self in everything save taking the cross, and so the old man is uncrucified—the old Adam is not put off, and since the heart is deceitful above all things, there is no more fearful delusion than an ascetic habit.

There is much lip profession, and plenty of crosses. If men do not get just what they train themselves to expect, they think it a cross. And so some will say, *this* is my cross. Others, *that*. When there is but one cross, and that is every man's, for the Lord was crucified for all, therefore, is each one to realise it for himself.

No man can partake of the life of the Son of God: stand with him on the sunny mount—the mount of glory—that is, be of the Church of the living God, but by taking up the cross of Christ. The Lord well knew the high importance of this truth, and the deep necessity of enforcing it, as he foresaw the antagonistic spirit, which is always *gracious to self*. We must learn Christ.

25. Whosoever, then, wills to save his life, shall lose it. To make this or that man's salvation to rest on some arbitrary decree, and to bolster it up by a change of conduct in respect of some gross habit, and which often results in self-complacency, if not religious intolerance, is to make void the commandment of God by the doctrines of men. Every one who saves his life—who does not take up his cross—ignores the fact, that he is crucified with Christ, and tramples under foot the mercy of God, which embraces every man coming into this world. Such an one shall lose his life—partake of the second death. Eternal life, then, is every man's possession, and he may and can lose it. But whosoever shall lose his life—this life, for Christ's sake, shall find it. So, then, he who in Christ counts all things as loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, is no longer in the flesh, but in the Spirit, and so finds life.

26. What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world? A man may gain much of this world, and, in consequence, with a sense of self-importance, and the approbation of men, comport himself accordingly. Does he thereby gain anything? What are the praises of men, who are strangers to the cross of Christ, worth? Can any created thing bring true, unalloyed happiness? Will the acquirement of this world's distinctions bring peace, glory,

honour, before an intelligent universe? The monarch, with all his earthly pomp, who knows all to be vanity and vexation of spirit, is, with the meanest of his subjects, liable to the temptations and sufferings common to man. Men crave for place and distinctions, and when they obtain them, they awake, after the novelty has passed away, to a consciousness of the unrest and responsibility they did not expect. What profit, then, is there if we mount ambition's ladder, and find there is not another step to take?

The mountaineer toils amid dangers, through tortuous and devious paths, to ascend the summit of the loftiest peak; he reaches the height of his ambition; but when there, in the panorama, he finds "the mountain is wanting." Men may toil and reach the summit of human ambition, and when they get there, they find the mountain is wanting. Their desire is enlarged, while the object by which it was fed is gone for ever.

For what, then, is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own life? This is truly said to be life in its higher sense. Jesus has spoken of the cross in Christ as every man's cross—his cross. Now, he speaks of life in the Son of God, as every man's life—his life. But man barter away the birthright of life for a morsel of meat; but suppose he gain the whole world, and herein having lost his truest life, what has he with all his gains? However much he may live in the esteem, applause, praises of men, what has he to give to purchase back his life? Is there anything in ten thousand worlds, in the whole creation, to be compared with the unsullied glory of the Father?

Let no man deceive himself. To hate this life, because health is broken down with disease and misery, and to hate this world because of error, cruelty, and oppression, is one thing, but to hate both for Christ's sake, is another. And when the truth comes home to any man that this life is but as a vapour, fast passing away, what would he not give for eternal life.

27. The Lord Jesus takes the ground of the truth—the eternal purpose of the Father; and from it puts these solemn and momentous questions, as he contemplates man toiling and striving for all that has upon it the curse. He is come to deliver man from the creature, and to bless him with the Creator—to bestow upon him the glory of the everlasting Father. The Son of man

will come in the glory of his Father, and with his angels. It will be the full revelation of the mount that cannot be touched—Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. Then will he reward every man according to his works—that is, according to the nature of them. It is everything whether a man worketh good or worketh evil—God willing and doing of his good pleasure, or Satan his: for it is already seen *that all we do savours* either of God or of man. Thus we shall be rewarded; not, indeed, according to the world's estimate, but according to heaven's unerring rule—according to what we are. Every man, then, has the power of determining his future. His condition will determine his everlasting portion: for it is said, "He that is unrighteous, let him be unrighteous still; he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still."

28. The Lord now approaches the subject of his transfiguration. It is *the correlative* of his crucifixion and death: the Son of God in his glory the correlative of the Christ in his humiliation.

It would be foreign to the subject—in explanation of the words, "There are some standing here that shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his glory"—to introduce the destruction of Jerusalem as the Son of man coming. Surely, when we follow the teaching of Matthew, there is no such difficulty that we should cast about for a solution of what is not here. It could have been said of some, that they should be with Christ, and see the manifestation of the Son of God in the glory of the Father. And it was perfectly consistent, in the use of language, thus to speak of some without regard to the rest. But the statement of the Lord had a far higher meaning. He had been speaking of death—his own death—how that it must take place before he could enter the glory of the Father; that he must be crucified before he could enter the kingdom. His words might literally signify a departure of this life, but they expressed the fact that some there would see the glory before they possessed *the indispensable qualification* (v. 25) for seeing and entering the kingdom of God—before, indeed, they had *tasted* that the Lord was gracious. (1 Peter ii. 3.)

CHAPTER XVII.

1 AND after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and
2 bringeth them up into an high mountain apart ; and was transfigured before
them : and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the
3 light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias, talking
4 with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for
us to be here : if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles ; one for
5 thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a
bright cloud overshadowed them : and behold a voice out of the cloud,
which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ; hear ye
6 him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were
7 sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be
8 not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save
Jesus only.

9 And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying,
Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the
10 dead. And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes
11 that Elias must first come ? And Jesus answered and said unto them,
12 Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you,
That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto
him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer
13 them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the
Baptist.

14 And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a *certain*
15 man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son : for
he is lunatic, and sore vexed : for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft
16 into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not
17 cure him. Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse genera-
tion ! how long shall I be with you ? how long shall I suffer you ! Bring him
18 hither to me. And Jesus rebuked the devil ; and he departed out of him :
and the child was cured from that very hour.

19 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast
20 him out ? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief : for verily
I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say
unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place ; and it shall remove ;
21 and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not
out but by prayer and fasting.

22 AND while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The^s Son of
23 man shall be betrayed into the hands of men : and they shall kill him,
and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding
sorry.

24 AND when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute
25 money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute? He
saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him,
saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth
26 take custom or tribute; of their own children, or of strangers? Peter
saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children
27 free. Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and
cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou
hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money : that take, and
give unto them for me and thee.

1. WE now come to the contemplation of one of the most
awful and mysterious, yet most instructive, facts recorded in the
Word of God. And its circumstantial details are full of deep
significance.

We have had distinctly before us the Christ involving a death
and resurrection for all men. Now we have the Son of God in
the manifestation of his glory. Upon the Christ, the Son of God,
the Church is built; and as the foundation stone is laid with
judgment and with righteousness, therefore must he ascend into
glory, and pour out of his Spirit, that we in him may cry, *Aba*
Father.

The historical reality of this narrative is unquestionable. At
least, it must be so to those who understand and grasp the great
spiritual verities corresponding to all the circumstantial details
here recorded. Matthew says, "After six days." Some attempt
to reconcile the discrepancy as to the number of days: but they
do not tell us why Matthew uses this phrase in preference to that
of Luke. The mind of the writer must be followed for the con-
nexion of spiritual and invisible truth, where there is no discre-
pancy, and where, indeed, true harmony is found. But where
the connexion is not followed, the meaning of isolated passages
must be taken for what they are worth. It will not be enough
to say, the universal Church has thought this—for the universal
Church has been too often the arena of bitter strifes and conten-
tions even for fundamental truth.

The Lord has taught distinctly, that if we learn of him, we must take his yoke and then find *rest* for our souls. His yoke is easy, and his burden is light. The yoke is the cross; the burden the glory of the Father. It is the knowledge of the Father in the Son who reveals him. Then what would more suitably express the condition—which must be recognised—preceding *the rest*, than these words; more so than “three days” (chap. xv. 32); since the Lord has just remarked that there were some who *will not* taste of death (chap. xvi. 25) till they see the Lord of man coming in his kingdom.

He went up into a high mountain apart, and was transfigured. It is the Old Testament mountain, on which God has made a feast of fat things; of wine on the lees; of fat things full of marrow; of wine on the lees well refined. It is the mount of *holiness*, that cannot be touched—Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God.

The transfiguration is the revelation of the Rock. His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as light. It was the expression of his Deity—the revelation of the Son of the living God. Upon this rock the Church is built; wherefore, the apostle says, “By the mercies of God present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. Be not conformed to this world”—and you will not, if you carry the cross—“but be *transfigured*.” How? “by the renewing of your mind, proving”—under this expressive word lies the image of the crucible—“the good, perfect, and acceptable will of God.” (Rom. xii. 1, 2.) It will go forth purged from the dross of your own earthly-mindedness. But this he still more explicitly describes, having reference to the Lord’s transfiguration: he speaks of Moses veiling the glory of God, as expressive of an outward carnal ordinance, so that the glory could not be seen. But in Christ the veil is taken away, and our minds are no longer blinded. And we all, with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, *are* changed, transfigured into the same image—not likeness, but image—having that of which he partakes; so from glory to glory, just as of the Lord the Spirit. (2 Cor. iii. 18.)

We may now understand the purpose of the transfiguration. Its object is to reveal what is present—the laying in Zion the foundation stone in righteousness as well as in judgment, and the

building of the Church according to the purpose of the Father, and not as Peter in his carnality would here suggest.

The truth stands out in all its distinctive features, and in marked contrast with the ignorance of men.

Let us now contemplate the true idea of the Church. The true idea of the Church is the Three. Christ the Son of the living God, Moses, and Elias—the Rock and the two here representing the Law and the Prophets. But what do we understand by these? They represent the two principles to which the Law and the Gospel respectively testify, and to which we have already referred in the names of Christ the Son of the living God, judgment and righteousness, with which the stone is laid. The living stones of the spiritual house must be one with the foundation—*Christ Jesus*. The Lord Jesus is the true Moses, the true Elias. He is what these two names with special prominence set forth: Moses is called by this name from משה found only in Exodus ii. 10, where it supplies the name to Moses, and in 2 Samuel xxii. 17, 18, where David, in a remarkable manner, applies it to himself, saying, “He *drew* me out of mighty waters; he delivered me from my strongest enemy.” To this truth Moses bore testimony, except on one occasion, and the exception proves the rule; for then it was figuratively said, “Moses must die.” He died to sin. And we have no evidence that his body saw corruption. Such, doubtless, was the judgment of Jude, 9th verse. Elijah, whose name signifies “Jehovah is my God,” “my strength,” lived *as one not of the world*, and witnessed to the truth that had its fulfilment in the Son of God, for he ascended in the glory of the Father. Such is the blessed privilege of the true Church—it holds converse with its God. These two men witness to the nature and character of the two keys by which alone they enter the kingdom. They bear witness, moreover, how that the gates of Hades cannot prevail. They talk together in glory: in body, soul, and spirit they are with their Lord. They are not uncovered but covered, so that mortality is swallowed up of life. And so John writes, Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: *but we know* that when he shall appear we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is.

The Father himself bears his testimony to the true Rock, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him." In these words there seems to be a special reference to the Prophets and the Law. (Ps. ii. 7; Is. xlii. 1; and Deut. xviii. 18.)

4. We now turn to the three disciples as representing the true Church, which must be as the Three revealed in glory. But, instead of being as the true Church, how do we find them? They are without faith, in ignorance, and in great confusion: types of professing Christendom, which now blunders, even as Peter did on the mount of glory. They are just what Peter represents them to be. Let us, he says, make here three tabernacles. They have no true idea of the Rock, nor of the Church, much less of the keys of the kingdom, or the gates of Hades, for they say, It is good for us to be here. Peter's words, like Eve's, predictive of the world, *are predictive of the professing Church*, ignorant and divided. So long as men take the human ground, it always will be so. All holy men spake as taught by the Spirit of the Father, and according to *visions* vouchsafed them. Let us, then, take the ground of the transfiguration, and from it preach the kingdom of the heavens; as the Lord said to Paul, I have appeared unto thee for this purpose to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee. So John says, He tabernacled with us—he was the true tabernacle which God pitched and not man—and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father. And, then, regarding the Church, he says of him, He was full of grace and truth. What this truth and grace were Peter tells us, saying, We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we make known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of *his majesty*, for he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, *This is my beloved Son*, in whom I am well pleased. (2 Pet. i. 17.)

6. And when the disciples heard these words, they fell on their faces, and were sore afraid. So, when he shall come in the majesty of heaven, in the glory of the Father, with his holy angels, to shake terribly the earth, the ungodly shall not stand in the *judgment*, nor sinners in the congregation of the *righteous*. (Ps. i. 5.)

Let us, in the midst of these awful mysteries, clearly understand the nature of the revelation. The twelve represent all men redeemed and blessed as the eternal purpose of the Father to all men. And the three represent those who obey that purpose of God, even as, in the parable of the sower, one fourth only understands the Word and presents the good ground. We, therefore, see these three *as representing* the true and invisible Church with Jesus, in raising the daughter of Jairus, witnessing how truly sin and death had been put away. Now, with him, as sons of God, and, afterwards in Gethsemane, as resisting unto blood. Again, as the twelve reveals the purpose of God, and what he has done for all men, and how, in his long-suffering mercy, he is bearing with them, yet it is the miraculous cures that reveal to us how men, exercising the freedom of their will, and conscious of their disease, come to Jesus and embrace the great salvation as exhibited by their outward healings.

The disciples, hearing the audible voice of a holy God, fall on their faces, and fear exceedingly. Men are not to fear at the sure Word of God. Yet they will fear if the day-star has not risen *in their hearts*. These men feared when they saw the power of the Christ, when he hushed into mysterious calm the raging elements around him. They now fear hearing the testimony to the Son of God. Had they possessed Christ the Son of God, it would have been with them, as one of them writes, *perfect love casteth out fear*. (1 John iv. 17, 18.)

So far, then, from Peter being the rock possessing the keys, having power to bind, he is under all the power of the enemy ; he is enslaved by fear. He is, in respect to the Son of God, in no better condition than he was in respect of the Christ, when *he savoured not* of the things which be of God. They were all alike : they had no faith.

The truth is revealed, and we are in the midst of it. Then let not the god of this world blind us, but let us have faith—let the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image—*εικων*, the true Son—of God, shine unto us. The Lord Jesus, as the true Rock, now comes to them, not to Peter alone, but to the three, and touches them, even as he touched the woman and the daughter of Jairus, and they arise, wherefore they are to fear not. For being risen with Christ they are to seek those

things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

8. And when they had lifted up their eyes, had presented them uncovered to the light—an image of the soul having put off the flesh, and filled with the true light—they saw no man, save Jesus only. When thus in Christ we put off the old man, the old Adam, and, then, in the Son put on the new man, the last Adam, created *after God* in righteousness and holiness of the truth, we have in us the true vision, we see the true and only foundation on which we are built a spiritual house. This is forced upon the consideration of the disciples, as the Lord Jesus instructs them, as he did before, concerning the Christ, “Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.”

Do they yet understand him? Have they yet faith? Peter confessed to the person of Jesus as the Christ the Son of the living God, but it was only outward. It was as his confession concerning Moses and Elias. He was, however, blessed when the Word of God instructed him concerning the Lord, but it is not with him, or the others, as yet realised, or, according to his own words, The day-star is not yet risen in his heart. What God has done and is doing, stands out in the Gospel independently of men; though some are made vessels of honour to complete the revelation. Let us, then, be careful that we do not follow the disciples in their ignorance, but embrace the spiritual verities themselves revealed and shadowed out.

But why were they to wait till after he was risen from the dead before they told the vision? Not only would he then be taken from them, but the vision would be fulfilled, and they would then no longer have power to know him after the flesh, but would have to witness to him, as the Lord sent Paul to open the eyes of men to turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God, that they may have forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them which are sanctified *by faith which is into me*. (Acts xxvi. 18.)

11. The Lord Jesus has still to combat with the blindness and ignorance of his disciples, who fail to discern *what is outward, what is a sign*. He commands them to tell the vision to no man until the Son of man be risen from the dead. Whereupon they ask him, Why, then, say the scribes that Elias must first come?

They had seen Elias, and they had "after the flesh" seen him, but they have no idea of the truth he taught—the resurrection of all men, of which we now have the seal in the foretaste of the Spirit; nor, indeed, have they of the death and burial of all in the Redeemer. Beholding, with the outward eye, the glory of his majesty, and taking that as his coming in the glory of the Father with his holy angels, they would have him rest on the mountain with Moses and Elias and themselves. They imagine the coming of Elias to usher in the great day of the Lord, and that his presence was the fulfilment of it. They doubtless fancy themselves instructed into the mysteries of the kingdom, as many who take the outward letter, and, following the teaching of their scribes, give their own spiritual signification to the letter with all self-confidence, but to their own confusion.

They would say, then, "As Elias is come, it only remains for the Lord to take the throne of David and reign." They had not the faith of the Canaanite woman, who knew that he *did* reign, and embraced him, in a mighty faith, as her King and Redeemer. The command to tell not the vision was a blow to their conceits, and they ask, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come? The Lord replies, Elias truly shall first come—is come—and shall restore all things. But I say unto you, Elias is already come, *and they knew him not*, but have done unto him whatever they listed; likewise, also, shall the Son of man suffer of them. The interpretation is natural, for the Word of God in no wise yields to an arbitrary, unreasonable, dogmatic teaching. The disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist. True: but what did they understand here in respect of him? and how far did they approach the truth through him? These two questions would naturally arise if they took a right direction. It was said of the Baptist, that he should come in the spirit and power of Elias or Elijah—that is, in the same spirit and power which Elijah possessed. Peter himself afterwards witnesses that the prophets possessing the Spirit of Christ—Christ and the Spirit of the Son—testified beforehand the sufferings of *Christ and the glory* that should follow. To this Spirit of Christ, Elijah throughout his whole career witnessed in a true redemption and the indwelling of a holy God. He renounced the carnality into which his nation was then almost irretrievably sunk, and pos-

sessed and enjoyed God in all the love and solicitude of his parental character. Not, indeed, as some extraordinary hero, set forth for the admiration of men, but as a Jew, an Israelite, a Christian, one among seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Elijah came in that Spirit and power under the Old Testament, in which the Baptist came under the New. Since both possessed the Spirit and power which constituted them Elijahs, and that Spirit and power was the Spirit of Christ ; then, the Lord himself was the true Elijah.

The Baptist, on being asked whether he was the true Elijah predicted, denied, but immediately confessed, saying, There is One coming *after me* who is preferred before me. This "after me" is emphatic. What, then, did he mean by it, if not that the Lord himself was the true Elijah ; and not only so, but that he was also Elijah in relation to the Baptist, who stood in a relation to him in which no other man stood or could stand, and by which he might be truly called Elias ? (Pages 65, 308.)

Elias shall restore all things. Who shall restore all things, according to the vision and the testimony of the Father, but the Christ, the Son of the living God ? The vision bore testimony to the restoration of all things confirmed by the Father, calling all men to hear the Son, who alone *in us* reveals the Father. And we learn of him, having first taken his yoke, carried his cross. All, then, being restored, we should walk accordingly, as the children of the last Adam, and not of the first.

"The Son of man, also, shall suffer of them." This is his covenant name, and, according to it, he is the true Elijah, that shall restore all things ; but it is here in his relation with the Baptist that he shall suffer. As the Christ, the Son of God, he, according to the testimony of the Father, hath restored all things. Then, having restored all things, he, with the Baptist as his forerunner, as preparing his way, is our great Exemplar. To this relation Peter testified when he said, God anointed Jesus Christ of Nazareth with *the Holy Ghost and with power*, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed with the devil, for God was with him.

Jesus attested, proleptically, his own *finished* work, before the great and terrible day of Jehovah, which was not only the destruction of Jerusalem, as the prelude of the world's judgment, but

that in which the Lord put away the sin of the world, and cast out the prince of it. Then, as Elijah, he denounced the false teaching of his nation, and called the people to a knowledge of the truth in themselves, as it was in himself, when the hearts of the fathers would be turned unto the children, and the children unto the fathers, for the honoured relations of life are warm and living symbols of the great realities themselves.

14. It is a great mistake to intermix the statements of the several Evangelists, and give the result as the exposition of any one of them. This is a very remarkable narrative, and is as instructive as that of the healing of the daughter of the Canaanite woman.

To separate it from its context would be to render it vapid and unmeaning. Having, then, a clear apprehension of the distinctive truths which have been educed, we have to consider what is the spiritual teaching our Evangelist would have us draw out from the facts he records. We keep the truth of God intact. It reveals itself independently of men. We must take the Word, and follow God, and not man. Therefore, we must not, however it may run counter to a morbid sentimentalism, place the disciples in any other attitude or position than they naturally take in the narrative. We must never forget that the Gospel is the revelation of invisible and eternal truths, without regard to individuals.

They come to the multitudes. Thus Matthew, as usual, intimates the universal application of the truths revealed; even as Paul writes, Whom he did foreknow, he predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among *many brethren*. Moreover, whom he did predestinate—and who were they that he did not?—them he also called; and whom he called he made righteous, whom *he also glorified* (Rom. viii. 29, 30.) Who are they, then, that are glorified? Those yet unborn? The context explains, “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up *for us all*, how shall he not *with him* freely give us all things—predestination, calling, righteousness, glorification?” Of which the transfiguration was the outward and visible testimony, and to which the disciples were to witness.

There came to Jesus a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is a lunatic. The

attitude of the father is consistent with the appellation he gives to Jesus. It belongs to him, according to the transfiguration, for to him every knee shall bow, and confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Even in this very name Matthew implies all that goes before. As Peter says, Know assuredly that that same Jesus whom ye crucified hath God made both Lord and Christ. By the death of Christ we are separate from sin, to be married to another, even to him who rose from the dead, and bring forth fruit unto God; and so he is our Lord.

But here is a son a lunatic. He is possessed of a devil, and suffers ill; sometimes he falls into the fire, sometimes into the water. In this description, having regard to the relation of father and son, *which is broken*, the two are to be taken as two; but with regard to the deliverance and healing, they are as one man.

The whole of the disciples were to read themselves in this lunatic. If they had, they would have come like the father for deliverance, and for restoration of the filial relation. Being thus, according to the coming of Elias, restored, not only in the earthly but also in the heavenly relationship, they would have known how to have met the case of another.

The relation of the sun and moon is, that the latter reflects the light of the former. Jesus, in the transfiguration, appeared shining as the sun. In the Old Testament, he is the Sun of righteousness; in the New, the Light of the world. Of him, the Church, as the moon, is the faithful witness, and gives forth her light amid the surrounding darkness. (Ps. lxxxix. 36, 37.) Of the seed of the true David, mentioned in the Psalm, it may be said, It goes through the fire because it abides the fire, which is the *holy* Spirit of the Father. (Chap. ii. 11, p. 64.) It is clean, being purified with the water of separation, which is Christ. (Numb. xxxi. 23.) Is it, then, possible, to counterfeit all this? A Christianity that savours of the things that be of man, is not of God. And so the disciples, instead of being faithful witnesses to Christ, the Son of God—the Sun of righteousness—were, as the lunatic, a counterfeit of the truth—a faithless and perverse generation.

We have in this one possessed a representation of the Christianity of the day, counterfeiting the truth: and well is it for us

if we know it, and seek each man for himself deliverance from it. He is a son, he is lunatic, and falls oftentimes in the fire, and oft in the water. Can we not see in these terms how man, possessed by Satan, though he would build his tabernacles, counterfeits all that is true, and frustrates the grace of God? If we have not used the keys in binding the Evil One, and loosing the oppressed, we are only Satan's counterfeit; for he in us professes sonship—professes to give the light of the glory of God, all that is in the Son of God—professes holiness and baptism, all that is in Christ. Man *is glorified* in Christ Jesus—to this, the transfiguration testified. Therefore should he, as a son of God, give forth his light. His calling is from on high, to walk according to it; but if the Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the Gospel of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, should shine unto them.

Thus, instead of a true faith in Christ, the Son of the living God, Satan sets up his counterfeit; but the one, as two in one, prays for deliverance, and so the restoration of the relation.

The father coming to Jesus mournfully exclaims, I brought him to thy disciples, and *they could not cure him*. Is not this our heavenly Father's complaint against the professing disciples of the Lord Jesus? Is it not the complaint of those who should be sons of God, walking in the light as children of the light? Do not many—and here we regard not the authority of place and position, for before God's truth these things are nothing—we know, that when brought face to face with the oppressed soul they are unable to set it free and to heal it? Then, why could not the disciples cure this one? They had the Rock—the keys—the power to bind and to loose; but they themselves were yet strangers to these things. How, then, shall they understand the maladies of the souls of men, and cure them?

17. What is the painful testimony of the Holy One of God to the disciples generally, but that which he had before testified to Simon. It is—“*O faithless and perverse generation! how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?*” So long as we are here, he is in all his glory as the Son with us; but if we obey not the truth, then his long-suffering mercy is tried to the uttermost. But these were not only destitute of the truth, but

they perverted it. Can anything more awful, more terrible than these words express, be said of the veriest counterfeit put forth by Satan? They were faithless, and they were perverse. He commands them, saying, Bring him to me. If we know not, as the ministers of Christ, the simple teaching of the Word of life, but *follow men*, how shall we know these lunatics, understand the diagnoses of the spiritually diseased, so as to bring them to know themselves and the remedy? This knowledge is not obtained by preferment and a recognised position, however, in the world's estimation, it may have been for many years respectably maintained.

Whatever has been said of the healing of the daughter of the woman of Canaan, in its relation to the truths with which it stands immediately connected, other truths are brought out in its relation to this miracle, since they are correlated. Together, they attest Christ the Son of God in judgment and in righteousness respectively—with which the foundation stone, the Rock, is laid.

The two women represent the lower nature—the flesh. (Lev. xii. 5; 1 Cor. xi. 7—12.) What is of the flesh, is flesh. The unclean spirit is in the flesh, to which truth that miracle or sign has especial regard. But in this it is man, who, in his relation to woman, represents the higher nature *counterfeiting* adoption. So, while he lives, he is dead to God.

The Lord Jesus has spoken of his own death, and manifested forth his own glory, according to the five loaves and the seven loaves respectively, and to which these two miracles of healing also respectively refer.

When the unclean spirit is cast out, and the soul is purged from all that is counterfeit of the true, then is it restored, in the Spirit of the Father, to all the blessings of adoption.

Further, the woman comes for her daughter, and the man for his son. They respectively come for a deliverance from the two forms into which the gigantic lie of Christendom is divided. On the one side, there are those who exalt human nature—who teach it, discipline it, and enrobe it in the form of godliness, so that it is blameless in all that is outward and formal, but it dishonours the Father; while the Canaanitish woman could read all this, however highly esteemed among men, only as the condition of her daughter. And, on the other side, we see those who profess to

have left all and followed Jesus—who profess to have the things of the kingdom, but not as the Canaanitish woman had, for they yet savoured of the things which *be of man*: we see those who loudly talk of the Spirit, but, being strangers to an indwelling faith of Christ crucified, have not put off the old Adam, and so adulterate the truth—the perfect standard of God—as the lunatic son shows.

The man sees in his child what the disciples and many Christians (?) might see in themselves—the lie to the words of Jesus, that Elias has come, *and has restored all things*. He obtains the restoration, while the disciples are not only without it, but are severely rebuked of the Lord for not having it. Then, let the two great divisions of Christendom learn by these truths—let them come to *the perfect law of liberty*, and look into it, and, as a man beholds his face in a mirror, let them understand themselves, and not forget what their generation is, but know him in truth, whom God hath made to be both Christ and Lord, to whom these two healings respectively testify.

19. But the disciples, confused and ashamed, come to Jesus apart, and ask him, “Why could we not cast him out?” Here is a lesson for many, who enter the ministry, and are thrust into the awful responsibility of the charge of souls, whereby they are taught that, instead of judging and condemning *the oppressed*, they should take home the reproof of Jesus, “*Because of your unbelief.*” Did they not leave all, and follow him? Did they not confess that he was the Christ, the Son of the living God? But the Lord is grieved and indignant—not at the weakness of their faith, but because they had no faith.

An indefinite and indistinct apprehension of what is faith leads many into confusion and uncertainty. Paul exhorts Timothy, saying, Hold fast the form of health-giving words, which thou hast heard of me. How hold them? “*In faith and love, which are in Christ Jesus.*” The two principles severally respect the two names. In fact, faith is Christ in us, and love is the operating principle of the divine nature, of the Spirit of life. How, then, shall any give forth health-giving words in the “cure of souls,” if they have not faith—if they possess not Christ?

The disciples were in unbelief; they had no faith; Satan

possessed them, and they were themselves as the lunatic whom they could not heal. The Lord said unto them, If ye had faith as *a grain* of mustard seed—and what a reproof is this!—ye shall say *to this mountain*, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove. This is Peter's rock, upon which he would build his Church—three tabernacles. The mountain that can be touched—the Church that is visible is in a true faith, swept away to yonder place.

The Lord would teach them the nature of true faith. And if we would follow the inspired writer, we shall have no doubt what it is. But let us first pause and see how even some, for whom we have the highest regard, err. We read, "Many explain faith as a grain of mustard seed, to mean *living* faith, with allusion to the keen and biting power of that grain. But it is certainly not on this side that the comparison is to be brought out; rather, as Maldonatus rightly remarks, 'It is the smallest faith with a tacit contrast between a grain of mustard seed, a very small thing, and a mountain, a very great.'"—*Archbp. Trench*. This statement, however, loses sight of the context. The Lord is keeping before his disciples faith itself, not whether it is lively or not, small or great, but *the nature* of it. "If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed." Here he places us all under one category. All are seeds—man, as the greatest, as well as the smallest—put into the ground. The mustard seed, proverbially the smallest, has faith, and its faith is in a death of its present condition, and then a bursting forth into life. If, then, we have faith, Christ crucified lives in us, and the life we live in the flesh is *in* the faith of the Son of God. Thus we understand how the very principles necessary to the germination of the smallest seed must be found also in the greatest—man. Except the seed fall into the ground and die—thus, dead and buried—it is alone. Though Christ, the Son of the living God, be continually with us; and although in long-suffering mercy he bears with us; yet we are alone, if we have no faith. And if we have it, we must have it according to its nature, else, how can we be a living stone, built on the one living stone, laid in Zion? Man is alone till he possesses the gift of the Father—restored in adoption in Christ, the Son of the living God; then nothing is impossible for the manifestation of the glory of God, for *with* God all things are possible.

Whatever, then, may be the oppressive yoke of sin, however laden and heavy burdened be our soul with a mountain of guilt—for there is none equal to that of professing Christians, who, in the expressive words of the miracle, fall sometimes in the fire and sometimes in the water—we shall, *if we have faith*, say to this mountain, “Be ye removed into yonder place;” and nothing, even to the possession of the glory of the everlasting Father, shall be impossible.

21. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting. These terms, as expressive of the truth, are inverted; so, also, the fire and the water in the miracle—the fire is the outward form of the life, as seen on the Mount; the water, the outward form of the true cleansing. And they are inverted by the force of attraction—by the full revelation of the Father himself attesting the Son as the Rock, and our adoption in hearing and obeying his Word. Into these forms men, being lunatics, oftentimes fall—some into one, some into the other; and however they belong to the Mount that can be touched, and is outward and visible, they are put away by a true faith—as the Lord says, this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.*

Does he, then, inculcate prayer and fasting, the distinctive and characteristic features of the Pharisees? He had rebuked them for their scrupulous observance of outward things. And when asked by the disciples of John, Why his disciples did not fast? he answered, “How can they fast, so long as the bridegroom is with them?” Yet he reproves his own disciples for not curing the lunatic; he reproves them for not coming out of that condition they were then in; he reproves them as a faithless and perverse generation, saying, How long shall I be with you? how long shall I bear with you? There is, indeed, here much to perplex those who fail to make the Lord’s ground and to follow his teaching. Our ignorance, our perplexity, are unjustifiable. Surely the words of infinite wisdom addressed to the souls of men respecting their eternal well-being, are to be understood. We must ever believe that there is no other remedy for the various forms in

* There is a play on these words, *γερεα* and *γερος* (verses 17 and 21), as on *περπα* and *περπος* (ch. xvi. 18), and the two pairs stand in *striking contrast* to each other.

which sin manifests itself—and a perverse ignorance and unbelief is one of the worst—than that which deals with sin itself. And in referring to prayer and fasting, he refers to himself. He said of his disciples, that they would fast when he was taken from them; and also, that they would in that day ask in his name. So, he would teach by these things, that prayer was the expression of his indwelling Spirit while fasting or putting off the flesh was of Christ. So, after all, it is the faith of a grain of mustard seed, by which nothing is impossible.

23. So important, then, is faith, and since the disciples had it not, the Lord proceeds to enforce it. They have need to be taught the first principles of the oracles of God—the principles of the doctrine of Christ. (Heb. v. 12; vi. 1.) In the neighbourhood of his mighty works he tells them how that by the unbelief in the midst of them—for what is not of faith is sin—the Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men, and they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again.

The disciples are sorry. It is not that godly sorrow that worketh repentance, but the sorrow of the world. They sorrow because they will lose their beloved Master and Friend. They sorrow as those without hope. Did they but understand his death, how that it was for themselves as for all men, and how necessary it was in order to be delivered from the condition of that lunatic, they would not grieve for him, but for themselves. If they mourned because of sin in the world, and, therefore, in their own hearts, they would understand the nature and necessity of his death; how that he was made perfect through suffering, as Peter afterwards testified. “He that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.” Moreover, in the revelation of the truth, they had the testimony not only of his death, but also of his going to the Father, therefore, joy ought to have filled their heart. (John xvi. 23, 24.)

24. It is from the lips and life of the Lord Jesus that we must learn the truth, although in the disciples we learn only the ignorant unbelief of professing Christendom: for it must not be forgotten that the twelve represent what God has done for all men. The collectors of the tribute now come to Peter, and ask him whether his Master paid tribute? He timidly answers, yes, when he should have said, no, giving at the same time his reason

for it; for if he had faith as a grain of mustard seed he would testify to redemption and the Paternity of God. When he came into the house, the Lord anticipating him says, What thinkest thou, Simon?—he could not here call him Peter, for by his word he had denied his Master—of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own sons, or of strangers? Now, if we be not the sons of God according as the Lord has taught, we are aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, and need redemption and blessing. The Lord Jesus would, by this incident, raise Simon to the apprehension of the truth.

A mighty king enters upon his territory hitherto enslaved by an usurper, and levies tribute upon those who, though delivered, would still be enslaved. Jehovah is such a King. He revealed himself in the overthrow of Pharaoh, the type of Satan, and his hosts, and required those hitherto under the bondage and slavery of Pharaoh to serve him, otherwise to pay the tribute, the half-shekel of the sanctuary, a ransom for their souls, thereby witnessing that he was King, and had imposed a tribute, holding them *in dominion*, because they had not submitted to him. They could not serve him but as sons, and they could not be sons till they had put off the yoke of the oppressor in the power of his sceptre. He required the half-shekel of the sanctuary, because the whole law was only outward, which was not made for a righteous man, (1 Tim. i. 9,) in whom love—the law of righteousness—works; and because their hearts were yet in Egypt in bondage. But now the true redemption is fully revealed. Jehovah is King against spiritual enemies that have held in dominion the souls of men. As the true David, he has in the Christ destroyed every enemy; and as the Father, he has in the Son brought the souls of men nigh unto himself, that they might, in and through the Spirit, cry, Abba, Father. “Should his Master, then, pay tribute?” Is he, like the Jew, yet in the flesh, under *the dominion* of an outward law (Rom. vii. 1), which is the strength of sin? Has the prince of this world anything in him? Rather, does he not reveal the Father according to faith? and so is no stranger, but a Son. So long as men are now *without Christ*, they are aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, though they pay their tribute in whatever form. But Christ having died, and abolished *in his flesh* the enmity—for it is the

enmity in the heart of man that necessitates the law of commandments contained in ordinances—so having consecrated a way for us; then are we by his blood, in which is the life, brought into the holiest of all, into the very presence of God. Thus in Christ Jesus, we that were afar off are brought nigh, and are no longer strangers, but sons.

Simon has, indeed, yet to learn the meaning of the words, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” We also have the revelation. We are blessed with it, and so are able to exclaim with him, to confess Christ the Son of God; but are we always ready to give an answer to every man that asketh of us a reason of the hope that is in us with meekness and fear?

Then are the children *free*. So the Lord himself, and on the testimony of the Father, claims this freedom. He claims it, because he is the Rock against which the gates of Hades shall not prevail. He claims it, because he honours the Father. And so does every believer, who, by the operating law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, is set free from the law of sin and death. Had Simon understood the truth, had he believed it, had he faith, he would have understood his own freedom, that it was identical with that of his Master.

27. The Lord implicitly attests the freedom of the whole human family in the revelation of the Father. Then why does he command Simon to go to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish *that first cometh*? The Lord, being free in the truth, could have objected to the tribute or custom. So can the believer. If so, then he here gives a lesson, that when we take the high ground of the Christian, which is independent of any outward or obsolete ordinance, we can afford to conform to the weaknesses and prejudices of others rather than scandalize them—drive them from us. But there was a reason, in the midst of this unbelief, why he should so command Simon. He was yet visible among them, and was yet to be betrayed into the hands of men who would kill him, and *he would be raised* again the third day; wherefore the half-shekel, during the visible state of things—until he had departed—was to be paid. It testified to those facts beforehand as a ransom and an atonement. More, the way in which it was obtained was a striking, impressive sign—it was as that of Jonah, for who should be the first to come up from the

deep but he who was the hid treasure (chap. xiii. 44). Could he have a truer sign of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Son of man, than in the circumstances connected with the finding of the stater, equal to two half-shekels of the sanctuary? As one piece, it showed how truly the Master and the disciple were one. The half-shekel (Exod. xxx. 13—16) is explained by the water (Exod. xxx. 17—21), which cleanses from all that is of the flesh, and which is Christ, by whom the soul is ransomed—which then possesses the unction from above, the holy anointing oil (Exod. xxx. 22, 28)—which is the Spirit, who is received only when the old Adam is put off, and it is our atonement; for then only are we one with the Father and the Son. Thus we see, in the perfect providence of God, how signs accumulate to force man to believe the Word of God.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1 AT the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest
2 in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and
3 set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye
be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the
4 kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this
5 little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso
6 shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso
shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better
for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were
drowned in the depth of the sea.

7 Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that
8 offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh! Where-
fore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast *them* from
thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than
9 having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine
eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: it is better for thee to
enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into
hell fire.

10 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you,
That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which
11 is in heaven. For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.
12 How think ye? If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be
gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the
13 mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he
find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that *sheep*, than of the
14 ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your
Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

15 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his
fault between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained
16 thy brother. But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two
more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be
17 established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church.
But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen
man and a publican.

18 Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound
in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in

19 heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth,
as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my
20 Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together
in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

21 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother
22 sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto
him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times
23 seven. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king,
24 which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to
reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.
25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold,
and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be
26 made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying,
27 Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of
that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him
28 the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-ser-
vants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and
29 took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow-
servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with
30 me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him
31 into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow-servants saw
what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all
32 that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him,
O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst
33 me: shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even
34 as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the
35 tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise
shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive
not every one his brother their trespasses.

1. WHATEVER may be said of the providence of God, man has to learn the great lesson of life in that way best adapted to his temperament, habits, and associations. While the laws of nature are almost invariable in their operation, a gracious Father in his perfect providence makes all things work together for our good. We sometimes see our corrupt nature manifesting itself in one or another hideous form; for all the unrighteousness of men proceeds from the one unclean fountain of the human heart.

And now, whether we regard the influence of the ministry in matter of faith or manner of life, or the nature or character of sin itself, the subject before us is one of the utmost importance. The Lord, in whom dwelt all the treasures of wisdom and of

knowledge, knew what was in man: with the perfect knowledge of the truth he knew how to weigh every man short of it in the balance. The truth of God is distinct and intact—independent of every man, whatever be his position or circumstances. Some of the disciples had been on the mount with the Lord, and were eye-witnesses of his Majesty; others had been left at its base with the opportunity of reaping a greater blessing in exercising the power of Melchizedek, but they knew not how. Had they realised the power to bind and to loose, and so lead into the kingdom of the heavens one vexed with the devil, they might have left to those, who were enjoying the high places of the earth, their coveted eminence. But they did not. Doubtless there was among the disciples much pride and recrimination. They who had been on the mount, and had vouchsafed them a visible manifestation of an invisible kingdom, who had seen Christ in his glory, after the flesh, were exalted above measure, puffed up by their distinguished privilege. They came to Christ, and although they apparently did not seek worldly things, yet in reality they did. They thought that they were in the kingdom of the heavens, had embraced the covenant mercy and blessing of Almighty God, but were told in distinct words to the contrary. They ask, who is the greatest in the kingdom of the heavens, not yet understanding the nature of it, nor the condition necessary to be of it.

It was at the same time that the Lord commanded Peter to go to the sea and obtain the tribute money, that the disciples came asking this question. Without doubt, among the foremost, were the two sons of Zebedee, who had been on the mount. But are we to exclude Peter from the scene? Certainly not: for before the Lord concludes he speaks. These three may have placed themselves over against the others whom the Lord had reproved for unbelief. And they again, among themselves, may have contended for priority.

All that pertains to the distinctions among men in the ministerial work is only secular. Yet for these men strive. The charge of souls is too often the ambition of men, even of those who have yet to learn how to cure them—to deliver them from the devil. Men can contest with men for the highest places on earth, but know not how to lead to the highest in heaven. This we perceive to be the case with the disciples, and it is brought

prominently forward as the very sin that casts the fearful blight now resting upon human society in all its forms and grades.

With all their distinguished honour of enjoying the intimate friendship of the Lord, the nearness of his person, and the purity of his teaching, they are yet strangers to the kingdom; they savour not of the things that be of God, but those that be of men. This was the more odious, as it was with respect to the kingdom of the heavens. Could there be a truer testimony to the condition of the lunatic, or that the disciples were in such a condition? It is clear that they had not only low, grovelling views of the kingdom, but also an utter ignorance of the condition necessary for entering it.

2. Jesus called a little child unto him; one not so young that it was carried; yet young enough to be taken in his arms, and placed in their midst. In one such little child are those very principles of the kingdom which his disciples found so difficult to learn, and of which they were yet ignorant, and which very many, who are puffed up with a successful career, with the praises and adulations of men, with a knowledge of science, and successful efforts in ameliorating the condition of their poorer brethren, have to learn even in a little child.

3. The kingdom of the heavens—the covenant of a Triune God, revealed in the Christ, the Son of the living God, is a reality, and it is within and without us. In one sense all men are in it, that they may in the mercy of God make it effective in their own hearts.

Jesus now tells them that except they be converted and become as little children, they cannot enter the kingdom. Thus he distinctly teaches them that while the kingdom embraces all men, yet, enveloped in their own dark cloud, they are not of it, and enforces the condition indispensable, and in its order. They must first be converted, they must come on the ground common to all men, and instead of puffing up the old Adam, they must crucify him—put off now, in Christ, all that they would in death, be partakers of his death and his resurrection, as the stater was given for both him and them. Death is the shadow of the true death in Christ, but if we have not him, then of the second death—the condemnation of all that is not of the Father. Thus, they become as little children, possessing an inheritance with them

that are sanctified by faith—which is *into* Christ Jesus. They must be *converted*, and become as little *children*. These words are twisted from their true meaning. The distinct idea of the cross, as the preliminary truth, is suppressed, and the words are made to give a sense which, at the best, can signify only the improving of the old Adam. To become as little children signifies not their humility or innocence, but their condition by reason of the grace of God. Every child born into this world inherits from its parents the old Adam nature with its proneness to corruption, which will so be till death; yet, at its birth, as in its coming into the world it departs from the chamber of bondage into light, a symbol of the truth; so is it received into the arms of the everlasting Father in the blessings of the covenant—so that, through Christ sin is dead, and by the Spirit of the Son the soul is alive. (Rom. vii. 4, 8, 9.) Thus is it partaker of the grace of God, *it has faith*; for it possesses the substance of things hoped for, and so is of the kingdom—of which circumcision and baptism are the outward signs and seals.

4. Whosoever humbleth himself as this little child, &c. The Lord is not enforcing a grace or virtue, but a condition of soul. No man can humble himself as this little child, but by denying himself, losing his life for the sake of Christ—that is, carrying his cross (chap. xv. 24, 25), which cuts at the root of all that is of the flesh. It demands even now the soul to be as free from earthly things as at death. This is true humility, not, indeed, in a cringing, servile fear before men, but in a *holy* self-negation, self-oblivion. To become, then, as little children, is to have the mind which was in Christ Jesus, in the death of the cross, and in the life at the Father's right hand. Then all the glory of man, all that man can boast of in the flesh, instead of contending for, we shall, with Paul, count only as dung; as he says, I forget the things which are behind, and press forward to the prize of the calling of God from on high. That glory is a reality, and *it calls* man. So he poured contempt on the glory of man, and drew such a contrast between it and the glory of God, as he counted it only as dung. But the disciples savoured of that which be of man, and not of the things which be of God. If, then, they humble themselves, and become as that little child—have the mind which was in Christ Jesus—they are the greatest in the

kingdom of the heavens; not that one was greater than the other, but they possess him who is greatest, most high in the glory of God the Father. He does not adopt the modes of human thought, but answers according to truth. However, selfishness, in its very subtle and most odious form, would betake itself into the kingdom, as they strive for pre-eminence in respect to religious things. But he who has the blessed gift of Christ, the Son of God, who is a living stone on the one foundation, possesses all that heaven can give; and so, in the abundant grace of the everlasting Father, is the greatest.

This incident was doubtless present to the mind of Peter, when, after his conversion, he wrote and exhorted those who had the keys. He tells them how that he is a witness of Christ's sufferings, and a *partaker* of the glory to be revealed. They were to feed the flock of Christ from no worldly motive. He does not forget the teaching of humility, as he admonishes them not to lord over their *κληρος*, or charge, but to be ensamples to the flock. He does not particularise inconsistencies, but goes to the root of the matter, as he urges them to humble themselves under the *mighty hand* of God—"Be as I am, a witness of his sufferings, for he that suffers in the flesh hath ceased from sin"—and he will exalt you in due season. This is what the Lord enjoins, for he who thus humbles himself is greatest in the kingdom. Thus we realise the Father, we cast all our care upon him, for he careth for us. Then what an experience! Does it not witness to the goodness of God? Having in a long life sown to the flesh, even when he professed to be a follower of Christ—to have forsaken all—he would now exhort all men to humble themselves, and become as little children, casting their care upon their everlasting Father, who careth for them; to be sober and vigilant, because the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour. He claims no indefectibility, much less infallibility. He had been sifted, and now exhorts us to resist, *stedfast in the faith*. (1 Peter v. 1—11.)

5. In this faith, as the Lord is now teaching, men learn how to use the keys, to bind and to loose. If thus we humble ourselves in Christ, we shall then be in his name; and so we shall partake in the Son of the glory of the Father. The child is not a pattern of humility, but humility itself, because of the grace of God. If,

thus, Jesus be in us, and we in him, we are greatest in the kingdom of our Father. Here is no strife for pre-eminence, to lord over God's heritage, which scatters, and not gathers—which scandalizes, and not receives.

6. Here the Lord again, and most clearly, expresses what is the faith which these little ones have. He says, They believe *into me*, not about me, or concerning me, but into me—the Rock. What is said of these little ones is also said of all who have the faith—they put off the old man, who is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and they put on the new, created, after God, in righteousness and holiness of the truth. Then to receive such an one is to realise the *oneness* of Christ Jesus in us. For if each believer goes back from his own, and merges himself in Christ, then Christ becomes all and in all, and it is the revelation of the one body and of the one Spirit, and so the body makes increase, the Church grows.

To strive after earthly things is to be an enemy of the cross of Christ. To seek pre-eminence in spiritual things is to defraud another; yea, it is a spirit that scandalizes a believing brother. Instead, then, of merging self, and receiving him, it would exalt self, and drive him off. Can such be disciples of Jesus? If we are his disciples, he warns us against defection; for sin will and does revive, and will take the form, as the Lord here implies, of holiness: "Stand off, for I am holier than thou." This need not be said to be known, for it is felt before it can be spoken. And it is found wheresoever the truth of God is not known, and where the cross, in all its power, as the first great principle of Christian life, is not effective. In Christ we overcome every enemy, and he remains as our holiness, for it is written, says Peter, Be ye holy, for I am holy, saith the Lord. Whosoever, then, shall scandalize one of these little ones, cause him to halt, to stumble, to fall away from me, despises the foundation stone, and it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

The Lord was surrounded by his disciples, among whom, as representing all men, were some who, though less prominently set forth than others for visible purposes, were, doubtless, Israelites in whom was no guile—little children entering into the mind of their Lord, while others, more favoured and privileged, did not. These

the Lord solemnly warns, and the figure of the millstone cast into the sea would, besides its contrast with the true Stone, upon which the Church is built, have a fitting application to the fishermen of Galilee.

7. Woe unto the world, because of scandals. It must needs be that scandals come. From the nature of things it is so. The world is in antagonism to the kingdom of the heavens—to the purpose of a Triune God. For what is of the world is not of the Father: yea, all that is not of the Father is of the world. Woe, then, to that man by whom the offence cometh. These scandals are not the ephemeral habits and pursuits of human society, but the world itself in its antagonism to the kingdom. To allow the world to come in, though it may assume a religious garb, is to belong to it. It is thus Satan works. The world has indeed made progress—the colossal man is developing himself, he is Anti-christ, a counterfeit of the true, and so comes in all the deceivableness of unrighteousness. Here we must take up our stand. If we are in the world we are not of it, but count all its glory as dung. But if we are of it we are against Christ, we despise the glory of the Father. And, since offences must needs come, they will come by us; and woe be to that man by whom they come. Here it will not be sufficient to assume a religious attitude, to have the form of godliness, or to adopt the words of Scripture, for until we are crucified to the world and the world to us, and in the panoply of God stand against all the wiles of the devil, he will use these things to accomplish his end.

8. If, then, any member of thine, thy hand or thy foot, by which thou walkest in the world, and takest of the things thereof, for thou art my disciple, and art in my kingdom, if they thus scandalize thy discipleship (chap. x. 38), begin to drag thee into that from which I have redeemed thee, cut it off; make no compromise because of circumstances or inclination, for no excuse can here be admitted. Whatever tendencies there may be in our depraved nature to enter into the world, and take the things of it, we must stop at the onset, and with that holy resolution, as the cutting off of the hand or foot would indicate, renounce at once and effectually all cause of scandal to our own life. And if thine eye scandalize thee, if there be not the appropriation and enjoyment of the things of this world, but only the longing eye—the

desire—pluck it out ; for to mind earthly things is to be an enemy of the cross of Christ.

The cross spares nothing. It is therefore better for thee to enter life halt and maimed than having two hands, or two feet, or two eyes, and to be cast into everlasting fire. It would, perhaps, be difficult to say which of the three members is the most precious, the most useful. However, in the mentioning of them the Lord takes the opportunity of giving emphasis to his words as respecting those by whom scandal comes. Not only, then, does he intimate the condition and give emphasis that his words may have a deep and abiding impression on his hearers, but in mentioning these three members, as members of the body, he would particularly refer to the three—the favoured and privileged ones of the body of disciples, and teach them all that however distinguished and privileged, though they had been with him on the Mount, were enlightened, so tasted of the heavenly gift, made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come ; yet, since they savoured not of the things which be of God, he must from his body pluck them off, and cast them from him, lest the body itself be destroyed.

10. The disciples from their ground use terms the import of which they do not understand. They ask, Who is the *greatest* in the kingdom of the *heavens* ? The Lord adopts their words, and answers from his own ground. We have already remarked who is “greatest :” even the little child in their midst, or he who humbles himself under the mighty hand of God — possesses Christ, and then is exalted in the Spirit of the Son. This they do not understand ; they are not in the kingdom, are not converted, have not begun to cast down every high thing that would exalt itself against the knowledge of God. They are still in the world from which offences come, and they are led according to it ; but he would lead them out of it. Hence the use of the word heaven in the singular and plural. The former is applied to the angels, and is in opposition to the world of which he has just spoken. But speaking of the Father in the heavens, which is the covenant formula, he would signify that the Father reveals himself in the fulness of the covenant. He is his Father in the heavens.

The Lord gives three reasons why they must not despise these

little ones that believe in him. In him theirs is the fulness of God. Taking, then, their true place in Christ Jesus, they are heirs of salvation, and angels minister unto them. Being brought nigh to the Father in the Son, their angels do always behold his face, they are ever in his presence; wherefore to scandalize them would, in effect, work confusion in heaven. And, thirdly, the Son of man is come to save that which is lost. Shall any, then, despise these little ones? The desire for pre-eminence is to despise others, even those whom God honours.

12. These words yet more convincingly show that the Lord Jesus was addressing, in particular, those who had been with him on the Mount. They had seen his glory, had heard the voice of the Father speaking from the excellent glory. The Son of man has left the ninety and nine to seek the strayed one. So then, his betrayal, death, and resurrection, which they saw on the Mount, were his going *over the mountains*. Thus the Good Shepherd seeks. He lays down his life for the sheep, that he may take it again. So he has restored all things. And the Spirit seeks, for the will of the Father is, that not one of these little ones should perish.

Some talk of a guardian angel, but what does the Lord's teaching show? He has left ninety and nine for one. Not only then is that lost one of more consideration than the ninety and nine, but that, if he find him, bring him back to the fold, those ninety and nine minister to him. So the heavenly fold is completed. And there is more joy over that one than over the ninety and nine holy angels that went not astray. Who, then, will strive for pre-eminence? which, in the very nature of things, cannot be, neither in the truth, or for the truth, which is Christ crucified. Far better to be regarded as the offscouring of all things, than to part with our title to the inheritance; for where this striving or desire for pre-eminence is, there is enmity to God and an enemy of the cross of Christ. The Lord Jesus revealed the Father *of the heavens*; as the Son of man he revealed the covenant Father, whose will he came to do. He tasted death for all. If, then, we know the Father in his self-denying holy love, instead of despising one of these little ones, bearing witness to that love, we shall be ready, if it were necessary, rather than that love should be ineffectual, to die the accursed death (Rom. ix. 1—3)

—to be offered up upon the sacrifice and service of their faith. (Phil. ii. 17.) Thus the Lord leads his disciples out of the world into the kingdom, to the mount that cannot be touched, and of which they had the vision—to Mount Zion, the sunny mount, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, to an innumerable company of angels, to the Church of the first-born, to God the Judge, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant. The Lord would have them walk accordingly, walk as crucified to the world and the world to them—walk as in the kingdom, in the light, as stones on the true foundation realise in him their relation to the Father in the heavens, and holy angels ministering unto them. Then all the glory of man would have its proper place, and then as they observed the ordinances of righteousness—fulfil the relations of this life, they would let their light so shine as to glorify their Father which is in the heavens. Such are the salt of the earth and the light of the world, in no metaphorical sense, but in all the severity and reality of the truth. Such are the truly great. And, compared with this, all the glory of man, all the greatness of this world, is, in the estimation of the Lord and his servant Paul, only as dung. (Chap. xv. 11 : Phil. iii. 7, 8.)

15. The great Teacher, the true Scribe, built up into the kingdom, teaches us how to build up the stones of the living Church, to bind and to loose ; and thus we shall not despise, but strengthen and establish them. Then if a brother sins against us, we shall strive to restore him in the spirit of meekness. We shall do it before God. We shall do it, not in the mere obedience of the letter, but according to the inward and spiritual truth. And who shall do this but he who goes in all the power of Christ—filled with judgment. He will go as the Son of man, who is come to save that which is lost. Every child of God who has tasted that the Lord is gracious, is interested in all that concerns the honour and glory of God in his relation to all men. Whosoever trespasses—sins, does so in the flesh, for that which is born of God cannot sin. He is bound by Satan. It is, then, for the disciple of Christ to use the keys, to know how to bind and cast out sin, that the soul may enjoy the glorious liberty of the children of God.

16. The Lord Jesus, assuming that we will go *in his power and love*, wherewith he saved us, directs us, for the honour and

glory of his Church, and for every living stone of it, not to jeopardize our integrity, purity of conduct and intention, in endeavouring to gain our brother, saying, If he will not hear thee, then take one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. The Lord regards not the disputations of this world, as he answered one who sought his decision, saying, Man, who made me a Judge over you? If we fail to gain a brother in our first interview, then the second will be rather for the protection of ourselves, and our words will be adopted by those we take with us. Then how single should be our object! how clear should we be in the matter! Then those who go with us will go also in the Spirit of Christ. And so, while establishing every word, those words will be the more powerful, as the words of all, to reprove *unto conviction* (ελεγχειν), that the brother may be regained.

17. "And if he shall neglect to hear them, then tell it unto the Church." It is no trifling matter to excommunicate a brother. It is not left to any one, two, or three to do it, but to the body itself, of which Christ is the head. A right hand, a right foot must be cut off, a right eye plucked out, rather than that the whole body should perish; for a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. So precious then is every member in particular, that the utmost care must be taken that no injury is done to it through the precipitate rashness of any one. Every one must know that he has removed the beam from his own eye, before he attempts to take the mote from his brother's eye. He must be certain of this, he must be fully assured of it, else, despite his "best intentions," his judgment will be not Christ's, but one without mercy. Where is the cross? Where is the one Church? Where is the Word of life in all its simplicity, integrity, and supremacy? Christendom echoes, where? Our divisions and our dissensions result in "an age sick with doubt and craving for assurance."

The Lord says, Tell it to the Church. There is then but one Church, and it is invisible. All that is visible is divided. It is of no use to be bandying anathemas one against another; nor, on the other hand, to make concessions, however great, for they are but Satan's device. It is far better that all that is visible had a millstone round its neck, and it was buried in the sea, than that Christ should not see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.

If, then, he will not hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man, and a publican. The Holy Land and its inhabitants *outwardly* represented the divine portion possessed by man. The heathen man is destitute of this; while the publican would represent him who is identified with a king in hostility to that land, and who lays his yoke heavily upon its inhabitants. By the use of these terms, Jesus would signify that he had rejected the true foundation—Christ, the Son of the living God.

18. Verily, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. In the preceding chapter it is clear that this communication referred to the use of the keys in binding sin and and setting loose the soul of man. He then that will not hear the Church, as a heathen man and a publican is bound with Satan, who is bound by Christ crucified. Then to take the Lord's ground, to be one with Christ, the living God, and to bind an offending brother, is to do what heaven sanctions. It is a judgment beforehand, to deliver him now over to the enemy, that the flesh may be destroyed, and the Spirit saved, in the day of the Lord Jesus: else he despises all that God and man can do. Hereafter this binding will be of body, soul, and spirit, in outer darkness. But now, it is *full of mercy*. It is to bring about a true repentance—a sorrow not unto death. Therefore, he says, if two shall agree on earth—the one who sorrows, finds repentance in putting off the flesh, and another, and shall ask the restoration of such an one, he shall be loosed. It is done of his Father which is in the heavens; it is done according to the everlasting covenant and its truths: for He would not that one of these should perish. It is the Church that excommunicates, and she does so because she is one with the foundation laid. And the restoration is for the same reason: for where *two* or three are gathered together *in my name*, there am I in the midst of them. To be in the name of Christ, the Son of God, is to possess him: for there can be no true sorrow, no true repentance, without him. So, then, we work with God; as wise master builders, we make manifest what God has already done in Christ Jesus.

What a mixture of feelings now possesses Peter. He does not forget the honour the Lord conferred upon him, when he called him by his new name, and vouchsafed him a vision of the king-

dom ; but he does forget the stern reproof that he savoured not the things which be of God, but those which be of man.

He may have heard of his brethren contesting, during his temporary absence for the stater, the place of greatest in the kingdom of the heavens ; which, as he truly thinks, would be to his exclusion. He therefore, and having heard the Lord's teaching, asks, How often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him ? As yet, he knows not that love which wells up at the return of a repentant sinner—a love that never faileth. Then, are not the words of the Lord in reply, and the parable which follows, a complete answer to that grievous lie which enslaves Christendom—that any one man, or number of men, has the power in the *perfunctory* discharge of an office, to bind or loose his fellow-man ?

Peter was not a stone of the Church—an elder among elders—until he was, in truth, a witness to the sufferings of Christ, and partaker of his glory. (1 Pet. v. 1.) He has been taught of the Lord the truths of his kingdom, but he does not yet see the all-important truths—the obligation to carry his cross, and follow the Lord (chap. xvi. 24, 25) : nor, until Christ be formed within, can he or any one be holy as he is holy. (1 Pet. i. 16.)

Peter, then, full of desire for pre-eminence, and aggrieved, having been instructed, and recognising the covenant, asks, Shall I forgive him *seven* times ? How significative is this seven times ! The Lord at once perceived him perverting the Word of God—the covenant ; yea, Christ Jesus ; yea, the eternal purpose of a Triune God ; for the number seven includes all these ideas—and indignantly replies, I say not seven times, but seventy times seven. Not that these words would express the truth, but they are called forth as expressing his indignation at the perversion by Peter of the covenant of Almighty God. Wherefore he illustrated his answer by the parable following.

23. This most instructive parable illustrates the relation of man to man, and of all men to the covenant of God. A literal explanation cannot be the spiritual interpretation, for they are distinct as the jewel and the casket that contains it. The infallible rule for a correct interpretation is the unbroken connexion of spiritual truths, and it must be according to the analogy of the faith (Rom. xii. 6) ; for so every one must teach. How,

then, can it be said, "There is nothing in the discourse going before, to lead immediately to Peter's question, in answer to which the parable was spoken."—*Archb. Trench*. The parable is an illustration of all that goes before, which is, indeed, the answer to Peter's question. However, his ignorance implied by the question—or, rather, the sinister motive that prompted it—affords the opportunity for a further exposition of what the Lord had been teaching. His question indicated but a carnal apprehension of the Lord's teaching; and, while we are enabled to fathom his carnality, we see the broad line of demarcation between it and the demonstration of a true faith. Peter himself, in different parts of his epistles, explains this parable. It is addressed to all men—to Peter in particular.

The kingdom of the heavens is likened unto a certain king that would take account of his servants. The heavens respect the Trinity in covenant relation. The kingdom is manifested in order to the revelation of the Father—the purpose of the covenant. The kingdom is the coming of the Son of man to save that which was lost—in the overthrow of all that was not of the Father, and the imparting of all that is. Of this kingdom and its glory, three disciples were vouchsafed a vision: to them, of all men, a right apprehension of it would be of especial interest. The Father is King, at whose right hand Christ is exalted, as the Son of David, destroying every enemy.

This "certain king" would take account of his servants. If we stand not in the relation of sons to God as a Father, we do in that of servants to him as a King.

He now takes account of his servants. Which account-taking is the revelation of the truth, to which we, *as servants*, cannot render its due. The Word reveals our inmost hearts, and the eternal purpose of a covenant Father towards us; for his Word is quick and powerful—sharper than any two-edged sword—piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Heb. iv. 12.) This Word the Lord Jesus taught the disciples. They were to hear him according to the "voice from the excellent glory." As the Lord afterwards said, O Father, I have given unto them thy words which thou gavest me (John xvii. 8). So the seer at Patmos writes, Out of his mouth

went a two-edged sword. (Rev. i. 16.) Of this Word Peter speaks in both his epistles: It is the incorruptible seed (1 Pet. i. 23) by which we are born again, according to the faith, as a grain of mustard seed—in a death with Christ, and life in the Spirit. “It is a sure word of prophecy, to which we should *give heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place* until the day dawn—that is, the darkness is put away—and the day-star *arise* in our hearts.” (2 Pet. i. 19.)

When he had begun to reckon: to reckon is to apply the truth—the power of Christ in judgment. It is the first of the two keys. It is the condemnation of sin in the flesh, that we may pass from condemnation into life, which is the other key. As Peter says, The time is that judgment must begin at the house of God; and, *if first at us*, what shall be the end of them *that obey not* the Gospel of God? (1 Pet. iv. 17.) The Gospel begins with judgment, and it began first with the disciple, so with the three to whom the kingdom was especially revealed.

And now one was brought: not three, but one—Peter himself, as he says, “judgment begins first at us.” He is brought. The simple, pure Word of God brings us. It unveils a visible world—ourselves naked, and open to the eye of Him with whom we have to do. It, in its own peculiar way, is sharper than any two-edged sword which divides the bones and the marrow, as it discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart; as “a light that shineth in a dark place,” it brings us to account.

This one “owes ten thousand talents.” The covenant of God embraces us coming into this world: so that, by the mercy of God, sin is dead, and we are alive (Rom. vii. 8, 9); of which circumcision or baptism is the expression—the outward seal and sign. Therefore should we, from our infancy, walk in wisdom’s ways—in the way of Jehovah—in judgment and righteousness all the days of our life; but, instead, sin hath revived, and we have died: and so, all have come short of the glory of God. And until faith comes, our whole life is as if there was no God, no covenant Father; and so, every action and every word are but the outcoming of the natural and unregenerate heart, for what is not of faith is sin. All our debts, then, are not the fruit of original sin, as if there were no covenant, but of not making effective the grace of God—our failing, therefore, of the fruits of

judgment and of righteousness. (Is. v. 1, 7.) The condemnation is, light is come into the world, and men love darkness better than light, because they have not believed into the name of the only begotten Son of God. This is the condition of all men, and of Peter in particular.

What, then, does the covenant require? It does not require this condition of man. It meets his necessity. Forasmuch as he had not wherewith to pay—without the Spirit of our Father, the Spirit of Christ, we cannot do the will of our Father which is in the heavens, which we can do only by God working in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure—the Lord, then, of that servant commands him to be sold, and his wife and children, and payment to be made. *This is the covenant which does not forsake him.* Then, does it command an impossibility? Jesus taught his disciples that a man must deny himself and take up his cross: he must hate his own life, and be crucified to the world and all that is in it. In other words, the covenant must be effective: he must part with all—his life and all related to it—wife and children; then payment will be made. To die with Christ is no mere sentiment; it is a stern reality. And then will payment be made, according to the will of God in, and by the indwelling Spirit of, Christ. We shall then “Add to *our faith*, virtue, and every grace.” (2 Pet. i. 4, 5.) Peter well knew that to be a witness to the sufferings of Christ and a partaker of his glory was to possess the Spirit of Christ, even as the prophets witnessed who also possessed him. (1 Pet. i. 11.)

To sell all and to pay was not understood by Peter, as is evident in chap. xix. 25. But what is here the answer? What is the answer of man generally? Does Peter yet understand the five loaves and the seven loaves? He does not know, and man does not know, how that he is burdened and heavy laden. Peter afterwards, remembering the teaching of his blessed Lord, urges all men to give heed to the sure word of prophecy, and not to fashion themselves according to their former lusts *in their ignorance*. (1 Pet. i. 14.)

Peter, hardened with unbelief (Mark vi. 52), exclaims, Be long-suffering with me, and I will pay thee all. He does not see his need of Christ: he would partake of the glory without witnessing to the sufferings of Christ. He would have a faith—yea, the

orthodox faith—which ignores the cross: he would be on the Mount and build his tabernacle, while savouring of the things which be of man. He has not the faith as a grain of mustard seed; nor has any one who does not hate this life for Christ's sake. God takes him at his word. He is long-suffering; and his long-suffering is no passive state, but leads man to repentance. Man may, by impenitence and hardness of heart, despise this long-suffering, and so treasure up wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. God's long-suffering is the *continued application* of the covenant; for, in our prayers, when the Word comes home to us, and conscience does its work, do we not seek the long-suffering mercy of God? And so, the gracious Spirit of God is ever striving with man. There is no condition worse than to be disobedient while the long-suffering of God awaits us. (1 Pet. iii. 20.) In the days of Noah, it brought on the flood: so now, it is speedily bringing on the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

27. Then the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. This is not contrary to the command to be sold. Peter may not understand the covenant, but the Lord nevertheless acts according to it. We have here revealed what is ever repeated when men are brought “into account.”

The parable as applicable to Peter, and especially to him, would not have been lost sight of, if teachers rightly understood that the Lord's visible presence among the twelve outwardly represented his presence with all men; hence a professing disobedient Christianity was to him the most hateful (Rev. iii. 16); while men, who, with faith obtained healing, outwardly and visibly represented their *corresponding* spiritual truth, as true believers.

The loosing him and forgiving him the debt were not one and the same thing. The former is redemption from sin; the latter, remission of sins. Where the former is, there the latter follows; where Christ is, there the Spirit of the Son will be. The word *απολυω* is used by Peter. (Acts iii. 13; iv. 21, 23.) It is the opposite of being bound—cast into prison.

For the reason we have just stated, we are not surprised to hear the objection to which we have already referred, “That there is nothing in the discourse going before to lead immediately to

Peter's question, in answer to which this parable was spoken." And so, we have no assurance for a correct rendering of it, especially of what follows.

28. When he went out. What is this going out, but the being loosed: the going forth in redemption and remission of sins—in the indwelling presence of Christ and his Spirit. Surely not "a going out from the presence of God—from prayer and spiritual exercises into the world." The "account-taking" reveals to a man what he is, and what he has by virtue of the grace of God. But does he make it effective? He may be enveloped with light, yet enfold himself with darkness. Did Peter yet know how to pray? Did he yet know what a spiritual exercise was? As yet he savoured only that which is of man. He had first been reprovèd in respect of the cross (chap. xvi. 23, 25): he had just seen the vision, and with the others was reprovèd because they were a faithless and *perverse* generation. Having thus been taught Christ, the Son of God, *He went out* for the stater. He gave it for his Master and himself. It taught him the truth that, where his Master was, he was with him: they were together the foundation and building—were one in the atonement. Jesus knew what was in man; therefore, in his disciples. Peter was sent for the atonement money, and finding a stater for his Master and himself, and *paying it*, he was thereby taught that his soul was redeemed from its Egyptian bondage; wherefore, on his return, he should have shown a different spirit; but, coming in the midst of the Lord's teaching, in which he was reprovèd his disciples for exalting the uncrucified heart—which will, in some form or another, be puffed up—not in any honour, but *to the filling up* of the flesh (Col. ii. 23), he, in unbelief, and, with an overweening conceit, asks, How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?

He went out, and in all the blessings of the seven—the covenant, but he does not make them effective. We repeat it. If we are not *set free* from the law of sin and death by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus—in whom we have redemption and remission—that law will work. If love in the divine life, which is only in Christ Jesus, be not ever working from within us, our freedom is lost, and we are again enslaved by the god of this world, and the law of sin and death works. Peter is an example

of this. All our professing Christianity, though we may sit at the feet of Jesus and be taught by him through the outward ear, and acquiesce in what he says; yea, observe the outward law according to his directions, is nothing, if the law of the Spirit of life works not from within. (1 Cor. xiii. 1—3.)

That same servant went out and found one of his fellow-servants in the same condition as himself, who could owe him but a hundred pence. It was the duty of the sons of Zebedee, or one of them, or whoever it was that disputed for pre-eminence, to have exhibited the same law of the Spirit of life. The wrong-doing of another, however, was no justification for Peter's wrong-doing. Failing to make effective redemption and remission, in a parting with all and rendering to God faith and love, is to trample all under foot, and to do despite to the Spirit of life. He takes his fellow-servant by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. This is no extreme case. If we obey the truth we love our enemies—do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that spitefully use us. But, if we do not obey, we are simply under the power of the enemy, and our corrupt nature will not hesitate at anything.

Then, what is the advice of Peter? Having referred to the disobedient in the days of Noah, who will be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit—in a never-dying soul (1 Pet. iv. 6)—having here regarded the flood as a typical foreshadowing of the nature of God's judgment in the putting away of all that savours of man, and the preservation of all that savours of God in redemption and remission, he says, *The end of all thing is at hand*: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And, as if he would bring us face to face with this most instructive parable, he adds, Above all things have among yourselves fervent, out-reaching love, for love will cover a multitude of sins. (1 Pet. iv. 8.)

But the Lord here shows that the human heart, assuming a religious superiority, is the most unmerciful. What is the history of the past? of antagonistic Churches? What shall we say of the present, where parties in one and the same Church are, in their opinions, most antagonistic to each other? It is no qualification of this painful condition that some indulge in sentiment and hesitate to find in Peter a type of themselves. It is a hard lesson

to know the heart, not, indeed, by the confessions of others, for they only minister to the desire of pre-eminence, but from one's own experience.

29. The fellow-servant fell down at his feet and besought him, saying, Be long-suffering to me, and I will pay thee all. He would not, and, departing, he casts him into prison.

He not only is not merciful; for, being a stranger to the mercy of God—that is, not realising his redemption from sin—how can he, according to the Gospel, show the same mercy? not having taken the beam out of his own eye, how can he *see clearly* how to take the mote out of his brother's eye? but he is described as using *judgment without mercy*—he casts him into prison. His fellow-servant, in the same condition, pleads in the same words that he used with his lord, who, in his compassion, not only forgave the debt, but gave him double for all his sins; but he casts him into prison. Thus, instead of *loosing* a brother, he, in the literal use of the keys, *binds* him against whom even the gates of Hades shall not prevail. And is not this much of the spirit of those who cannot bury what *they call* their non-essentials in the death of Christ? since they too often make them the occasion of the most bitter and rancorous hatred that one man can have towards another. And so of others who make the welfare of a brother's soul of less importance than their injured dignity.

Peter, as we have already seen, refers to this circumstance as he speaks of the *long-suffering* of God waiting in the days of Noah, and of disobedient souls *in the prison*. God is long-suffering, but man does not pay. The judgment is now; for no man can have the mercy of God without judgment. It is the putting away of the filth of the flesh, the condemning of sin in the flesh in Christ, that we may have a good conscience *in* God.

But Peter, being “disobedient to the heavenly vision,” having not “the faith as a grain of mustard seed,” is in the flesh, and in all the filth of it. His fellow-servants are very sorry at what was done. Would that men could but see themselves as others see them. What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? In spiritual pride he is puffed up. He does not humble himself under the mighty hand of God. What, then, does he gain when God resisteth the proud, and all men grieve?

They tell his Lord, not King but Lord—it is his marital name—a term on the lips of Jesus in this parable, full of meaning, as Peter afterwards said to the Jews, Know, assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ. (See Matt. xxii. 42.) His Lord is angry. This anger is intensified since it is the anger of a holy love against him who despises union with his Lord for that with sin. Increased privileges perverted enhance the condemnation, and there is no escape. He is delivered to the tormentors. He is delivered up to all the power of an evil conscience, to the flesh, its passions, lust, and desires which have enlarged themselves as hell, and from which there is now no redemption, and so no remission. Instead, then, of paying the last farthing, he will not pay the first, as the debt increases irremediably.

35. This is the judgment of heaven. It is the judgment of a covenant Father against every one who dishonours him or despises his brother. It will be an awful condemnation, for in his compassion he has revealed himself in redemption and forgiveness of sin in Christ Jesus. So he is ever revealing himself, as the prophet writes: I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions; and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee (Is. xlv. 22); but man rebels and despises him who has thus nourished and brought up children. (Is. i. 2.)

So does the Lord, according to the words spoken from the excellent glory, testify to the kingdom of the heavens, that he may reveal the Father in the heart of man.

CHAPTER XIX.

1 AND it came to pass, *that* when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judea, beyond Jordan ;
2 and great multitudes followed him ; and he healed them there.

3 The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him,
4 Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause ? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that He which made *them*
5 at the beginning made them male and female, and said, for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife : and they twain
6 shall be one flesh ? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of
8 divorcement, and to put her away ? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives : but from
9 the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery : and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

10 His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with *his* wife, it
11 is not good to marry. But he said unto them, All *men* cannot receive this
12 saying, save *they* to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from *their* mother's womb : and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men : and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive *it*, let him receive *it*.

13 Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put
14 *his* hands on them, and pray : and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me : for of
15 such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid *his* hands on them, and departed thence.

16 AND, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good
17 thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life ? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good ? *there is* none good but one, *that is*, God. But
18 if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which ? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit
19 adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour

- thy father and *thy* mother : and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
- 20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my
21 youth up : what lack I yet ? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect,
go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have trea-
22 sure in heaven : and come *and* follow me. But when the young man heard
that saying, he went away sorrowful : for he had great possessions.
- 23 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich
24 man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say
unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than
25 for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. When his disciples
heard *it*, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved ?
26 But Jesus beheld *them*, and said unto them, With men this is impossible ;
but with God all things are possible.
- 27 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all,
28 and followed thee ; what shall we have therefore ? And Jesus said unto
them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the
regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye
29 also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And
every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or
mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an
hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.
- 30 But many *that are* first shall be last ; and the last *shall be* first.
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1. THE important truth, prominently brought out in the preceding parable, respects every man. In Peter, each one may read himself. However, in the account-taking, there is the one covenant, and it is of universal application. The transition from place to place gives the truth taught—its especial prominence and distinctness.

A great multitude followed him, and he healed them there. The blessings of the covenant, made with all flesh, are bestowed upon all ; this Peter emphatically asserts. (Acts x. 34—43.) It requires of all *that they part with all and payment be made* ; else they are not healed. But the Lord healed all, and healed them there. He enforced the necessity of redemption and remission. He preached both in his own name, and they obeyed—of which their healing was the outward sign, else it could have no significance whatever.

The preceding parable brings out prominently the work of a certain King, of Christ, *in a judgment with mercy*. The death of

all is an accomplished fact; and, although the Spirit is given to all, yet, if the work of Christ be ignored, the Spirit is quenched.

We now approach the consideration of the correlative truth—*righteousness*—that is, the union of the divine nature with the soul of man, *by which* the payment is made.

It is a great mistake, and most pernicious in its tendency, to take parts of the divine record, and endeavour to explain them as separate from the context, however elaborate and learned the exposition may appear. For instance, to take “the unmerciful servant,” apart from all that precedes it, and without reference to what follows, is to show that consecutive truth and the analogy of the faith are unnecessary to a true interpretation. Whereas, if we hold to the mind of the writer and follow him, we not only obtain a true interpretation of what follows, but also throughout trace the inspiration of the Word.

3. The Pharisees *also* approach the Lord, tempting him. They had heard his teaching. It was spiritual in all its import. They would now confound him in respect to it, as they themselves were confounded upon the law of divorce. However, Matthew sets forth this incident in order to bring out in the most striking and expressive manner the correlative truth of the covenant. The Pharisees, in their separation from other men, as if that constituted holiness, had no idea of the righteousness of God any more than they had of holiness. And what shall be said of those who would give us an interpretation of the Word of life, and who regard this passage, as they do very many other passages, only according to the letter, and not the Spirit!

Peter asks if he shall forgive his brother seven times? The Lord clothes the question with his own words, and raises it into its proper sphere, and in establishing the holiness of the covenant, he cuts at the root of all selfishness. Now the Pharisees ask, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? The school of Schammai does not suffer divorcement except for adultery or uncleanness; that of Hillel does for any trifling cause, as spoiling the food, &c. The Lord takes them back to the Word, not merely to answer their question, but also to lead them to a spiritual understanding of the subject. He taught them how that God, at the beginning, had created them male and female; that he created them one flesh; that when Adam stood forth

from the hand of his Maker, in all the integrity of his creation, he was then male and female, as one flesh. Then the woman was made for the man, and not the man for the woman. And when the woman was brought to the man, he said, This is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh, and she shall be called woman, because she was taken *out* of man.

The soul is of God, and is created for him. And he who is joined to him is of one Spirit in the Lord ; of which union marriage is the symbol. For man, then, to realise his union with God, there must be a forsaking of former ties ; for this is superior to those. At the first all were created male and female ; therefore should a man leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife, and they should be one flesh. This pure and holy state of the first pair was only a *shadow* of the great reality—the union of God with his creature. Thus the Lord takes his questioners to a period far antecedent to Moses, or the errors of Jewish Rabbis. Wherefore, he says, they are *no more* twain, but one flesh. So should they regard God's covenant with man, which is often set forth as a marriage-union with God—a union that necessitates a separation from all other ties. If the shadow required it in its purity, how much more so the reality ? since all that is of man is corrupt, and has corrupted his way upon the earth. (Gen. vi. 12.) Therefore *ye are* become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him that rose from the dead, that ye may bring forth fruit unto God. (Rom. vii. 4.) So long as we walk after the flesh—follow it—we are united to it, united to sin in the flesh, and bring forth fruit into Satan. But if the old Adam be crucified we are united to him that rose again—the last Adam—and bring forth fruit into God, for we are of one Spirit in the Lord. This is the covenant. Not, indeed, dependent upon our bringing it about, or making it, but it is the condition of all men, yea, from the beginning. Though sin has invaded the covenant mercies of God, and separated man from his covenant blessings, yet the true Elijah has restored all things ; for we thus judge if one died for all, *then all died*, that they who live should henceforth not live unto themselves, *but unto him* who died for them, and rose again. (2 Cor. v. 14, 15.) Marriage is God's appointed symbol of this truth. Then, according to the covenant made with all flesh, every man is redeemed and blessed, and he is

to realise his union with God, separate from the creature, that he may bring forth fruit into God. *What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.* This aphorism of the Lord is not limited to marriage, but has direct reference to the great truth of which marriage is the sign. God has, in the covenant, united all to himself from the beginning, and is not imputing to any their trespasses. It is, then, for every man to obey the truth in and through Christ, the Son of the living God.

The Lord's reply is unanswerable. The Pharisees cannot take the ground on which he places them. However separate they may be from all that was objectionable in a moral point of view, they had not embraced the covenant. Then from their own ground they ask, Why did Moses, then, command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? The answer is a most pregnant one: "*Because of the hardness of your hearts.*" God had revealed his covenant. He had redeemed them unto himself; had wooed them; and, as their Husband, had loved them with an everlasting love, but towards him they were as adamant. They rejected the Holy One of Israel, and as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so had they departed from the Lord. Moses then suffered them to put away (*απολυω*) their wives, for their divorcement would be the *truer* sign of their condition—the violation of the covenant of their God. How is the faithful city become a harlot? It was full of judgment, righteousness lodged in it. Instead of these blessings of the covenant, it is full of murderers of spiritual life and of all that is of the Father. This harlotry is not in the impurity of living, but in putting away righteousness, and this because judgment had departed. Isaiah begins with the covenant, how that the Father had nourished and brought up children, but they had rebelled against him. Then, in the uncleanness of their hearts, all the outward signs and ceremonies, though of God's appointing, were not only vain, but hateful to him. Their incense, as representing the going forth of indwelling Deity, and so a sweet-smelling odour to God, was only an abomination—*βδελυγμα*. Their new moons attesting the newly received light; their Sabbaths, that God was their rest; and their feasts, the abundance of his blessing, he hated. Even their solemn meeting, where he did of yore meet with them, was iniquity. In their hard hearts they had rejected and trampled

under foot the covenant; they who should be HOLINESS UNTO JEHOVAH had no soundness at all. However, despite of this, the true condition of all men, since the Father has revealed himself as the Saviour of all men, is in judgment and in righteousness, which is the Gospel, which men are to be taught, and which is far different from believing in a figment of merits whereby their sins are forgiven, and all is well; for in Christ sin is cast out—sin that would dissolve the everlasting covenant—and in the Spirit God has blessed all the families of the earth. “Therefore, what God hath joined together let not man put asunder.” Then it is the bounden duty of every one to have judgment and righteousness, and yield the fruits thereof, else he is only a spiritual harlot, and a murderer of the Holy One of Israel. (Is. i. 21; v. 7.)

9. The Lord may have been enforcing the obligation to possess the righteousness which is of God by the symbol of marriage, when these men take him according to the letter. He replies, But I say to you—whatever Moses may, under the circumstances, have said—I say, now that the truth, the covenant, is fully revealed, its sign must be maintained. Men have now no licence to modify this sign of heaven. Whatever may be said in respect of the progress of civilization, it is the truest civilization to be a citizen of heaven, grasping the reality, and holding the sign accordingly. Fornication alone dissolves the marriage tie. The act of impurity *de facto* does so; for he that is joined to a harlot, is one body. (1 Cor. vi. 16.) Man, at the beginning, yielded to sin, and fell. The presence of sin in the heart is spiritual impurity. Then to live in the flesh is to be separate from God. But in Christ sin is cast out; for if Christ be in us, the body is dead because of sin; and the Spirit is life because of righteousness. (Rom. viii. 10.) Thus, having first put away his wife—that is, the flesh, guilty of fornication, having executed true judgment, or rather judgment of truth, he is purged as by fire; and then he receives righteousness from the God of his salvation; he is united to God, and brings forth fruit unto him. But if he takes this righteousness without judgment—that is, if he is united to God before he has put away—*απολυω*, xviii. 27—his wife, guilty of fornication—that is, the flesh in which sin dwells, he is guilty of adultery. Such is the condition of these Pharisees

(Is. lviii. 2: Rom. ii. 17—20), and of all who have not obeyed the truth, Christ crucified. But there are some who, having received Christ, have put away their wives—are divorced from the flesh; then if they marry her that is put away—that is, return to the flesh, and follow it, it is adultery, and they bring forth fruit into sin. Thus the Lord, as a true scribe in the kingdom of the heavens, knows how to bring forth out of his treasure things new and old.

10. But the disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry—words, indeed, very significative, which, however, they ought not to have uttered, for it is good to marry. Still we are thankful for what they elicit from the Redeemer. They do not yet understand the teaching of their Master; they take only the letter, and are blinded by the god of this world. It is the duty of all men to marry; not only because a man is imperfect without his wife—for they twain are one flesh—but also, as one flesh they witness to the everlasting covenant.

In the observation of the disciples, we may perceive how, in general, error arises in taking the ground of the creature instead of that of the covenant.

Had they understood the Lord, they would have seen how men, failing to take the ground on which the covenant places them, question the covenant itself—question the mercy and love of that all-gracious God, who cannot deny himself. However, the Lord does not put back the question, but more than negatives it by his answer. “It is not good to marry,” would be right, where there is physical defect or impotence,—there nature shows how sin has invaded her domain, and left his blighting curse; or where a cruel custom of deprivation is practised; and, thirdly, where fanaticism inflicts self-mutilation. For obvious reasons, it is not good for such to marry. But is this condition natural? Did God create them so, when in Adam all were created male and female? All were created and sent forth with *the blessing* to multiply and replenish the earth, and so be a witness to the Father. Did God, then, create any, that they should give the lie to this truth? The condition is one of separation and desolation: yet it is not good for man to be alone. Then it is good to marry, and the exception proves the rule. But more, if we take the ground of the cove-

nant, since no defect can be ascribed to it, then it should be fully embraced and realised. Christ, by his death for all, has placed all men in it. He is the *power of God*, and, by his resurrection—attested by the outpoured Spirit—has united all to himself. Then it is for every man for himself to realise the covenant in all its integrity *and power*. And if the condition of the eunuch be one that is contrary to nature, and the Lord has, in respect to it, allowed that it is not good to be married, then, since God has from the beginning established his covenant, nature, in her normal condition, demands of every man that he should marry, and not put away his wife except for fornication.

He that is able to receive this, let him receive it. Having thus disposed of the disciples' question, the Lord leaves us to the inference in a spiritual point of view: that all men are in covenant relation to God, which they are bound to obey in the full blessings of his grace.

13. We now come to an incident which, though recorded in a few words, is full of precious meaning, and were it not for the connexion of ideas in their true and consecutive order, which gives weight to every word, we might easily fall into the very absurd practice of giving the explanation in another and fuller account, and so disregard, if not lose altogether, the idea prominent to the mind of our Evangelist, and indispensable to the understanding of what follows.

In this touching narrative we have a confirmation of that which we have already stated, that the Lord, in healing the great multitudes that followed him, taught the covenant in all its fulness—not only the necessity of parting with all, but also the righteousness of God in a union with the divine nature, in oneness with Christ, the Son of the living God. But the Pharisees, taking exception to his teaching from an outward and literal point of view, would yet entangle him in their squabbles, and so, with a wicked intention, they tempted him. His own disciples took a like objection, but expressed in a different form. The former reject Christ when they put away the flesh for every cause. Thus, men impose restraints upon the carnal nature because of *sins*, but they do not deal with sin itself, whence all sins proceed. The latter profess to follow him, yet know him not—have not yet learned Christ—as they exclaim, It is not good to marry.

Here we come to a very mischievous error. They bring children that he should put his hands on them and pray. They who brought them, doubtless, had both heard and seen him teach and heal the great multitudes. In his teaching, he would set forth the covenant in redemption and remission; and would lay his hand upon the sick, signifying oneness—union with him, of which the touch or the laying on of hands was the symbol. The error, then, is in supposing that in the laying on of his hands, as by some outward and visible act, he imparted the divine life. That they did suppose this is evident from their asking him to pray. Whereas, all his healings were signs (*σημεία*) of spiritual facts *already accomplished*. His outward healings were expressive of inward spiritual healings. And as seals or expressions, the inward and spiritual must be already there.

The invisible kingdom does not work from what is outward and visible, but from that which is inward and invisible. The true work of the minister, *as a fellow-worker with God*, is to bring out into demonstration what the grace of God has already bestowed upon all men: for God is no respecter of persons; therefore, whosoever in every nation feareth him, and worketh righteousness, in whom righteousness works, is accepted of him. (Acts x. 35.)

Jesus has already taught, in the preceding chapter, by the humility of the infant, the condition indispensable for entering the kingdom. Here he teaches the correlative truth, how that, by partaking of the divine nature, the infant *is* of the kingdom of the heavens—of which truth, the simple touch or laying on of the hands is the sign. It is, then, not the imparting of the invisible, but that which is far more, *the drawing out* into visible manifestation the invisible, and so demonstrating most truly how that these little ones were of the kingdom. The relation in which the two truths stand—the condition exhibited in the former child and this being in the kingdom—is that which the Lord is here inculcating; and which the Pharisees, the disciples, and they who brought the children—different types of religionists—could not understand, because they failed to make the ground of his teaching.

14. The disciples would hinder those bringing the children to Jesus, seeing them, doubtless, in full health and vigour of life, so

having no need of him ; but he reproved them, for he saw how that they yet failed to understand him.

The command of Jesus, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not," is obeyed in baptism. Then, baptism, the sacrament of Christ, does not give them what they already possess. All it can do is, what the laying on of the hands of Jesus does—it signifies that they are already one with him, and, as a sign or seal, brings into demonstration what his grace has already done. This truth is recognised in a passage in the Baptismal Service, where we pray that the child may lead *the rest* of its life according to *this beginning*.

We have already shown that the infant so soon as born has faith, and, having faith, possesses love. The definition of the one faith is, The substance, and it demonstrated in the life—"The evidence of things not seen." (Heb. xi. 1.) In the grace or gifts of the everlasting Father, the covenant in all its blessings—the covenant made with all flesh—is the birthright of every child of man born into the world ; then, what is there in the infant of days to stay the hand of Almighty God ? Circumcision and baptism are signs and seals of the covenant, and so attest the grace of God. As Paul says—now men go very far out of their way to explain this passage—Without the law sin was dead, and I was alive without the law once. (Rom. vii. 8, 9, = verse 4.) Once!—The only time that this strict observer of the law was without it was before circumcision, and he was no proselyte, for he was circumcised on the eighth day. And he states it emphatically, as he mentions "without the law" twice. Of such is the kingdom of the heavens.

What do we not lose by neglecting to take the connexion of ideas in the writer's mind. Men here and there eagerly grasp a *literal* connexion, and they exult as if they had found great spoils. But what is it worth ? Have we followed the mind of our blessed Lord, as the Evangelist opens it up to us ? If so, then we shall find an important link connecting the following narrative with what goes before.

16. The young man who now comes to Jesus doubtless felt, more than any around the Lord, the truth of his words. He would understand how that the children were of the kingdom of the heavens. As he says, What good thing shall I do that I may

have eternal life? He looks back to his childhood, from which he has led a most exemplary life. But he does not see what Paul saw, how that, notwithstanding the grace of God, when the commandment came, "sin revived, and he died." And the commandment, which was to life, he found to be unto death; for sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived him, and slew him. Sin, thus, incites the carnal nature to do something—to believe, or to work, and so deceives. Does it say, Believe and thou shalt be saved. Believe what? We may believe much, but not that we are dead to sin, crucified with Christ. This, indeed, cuts down at once, and on the very threshold of faith, the carnal nature; for the axe is laid *at the root* of the tree, that men may make it effective. If men do not obey this truth, however the commandment may come, sin deceives, and the carnal nature works. *We must, then, throughout life, come continually to Jesus, that Christ crucified, and the life of the Son of God, may be in us realities*; for if righteousness came by the law, then Christ died in vain.

The young man came to Jesus. He has heard his word, a word of power. He comes to him with the utmost reverence. He comes regarding the highest and most blessed thing that can engage a whole life, as he says, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? What good thing can he do? What good thing can any man do? Yes, there is one good thing—there is the good part which cannot be taken away—the axe at the root of the tree, make it effective, even as the Lord, using the keys, has shown the way into the kingdom.

17. Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, God. The silence of the young man would indicate his acquiescence to the inference that he, whom he called good, was God. Jesus then says, If thou wilt enter into life, if thou wilt know God, keep the commandments. No negative observance, no mere restraining of the carnal nature, is the keeping of the commandments. All that savours of man must be put off, must be cast away as an abomination, that there may be only that which savours of God—the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus; and thus, in this love only, are the commandments kept.

Jesus sets before him the second table; when—as Paul once said, Touching the righteousness which is in the law, I am blame-

less—he replies, All these things have I kept from my youth up. Assuming that he had to the utmost of his ability obeyed the written law of God, and had assented to the Deity of the Lord Jesus, some with him would ask, “What lack I yet?” Surely we may say, he was the highest form of type of religionists that would put to shame many of the present day.

21. Jesus replies, “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in the heavens.” The teaching of the present day is, “Thou canst not be perfect,” and we have forced upon us the dogmas of men and of churches. Whereas, we can be perfect, and are so as unto God in Christ Jesus—in whom all that is of man is crucified, that all that is of God may work in us, to will and to do of his good pleasure. So have we the mind that was in Christ Jesus, and by the mercies of God we present the good, perfect, and acceptable will of God.

Though he believed in the deity of Jesus, had obeyed the outward law, yet he lacked the covenant of God. He yet lacked the one thing needful, and owes the ten thousand talents. Although he has kept the commandments, yet he has not been loosed that he might render payment. We are here instructed through a rich man, and the Lord has respect to the two truths of the covenant—*judgment* and *righteousness*, redemption and remission, yet with especial regard to the blessing of divine life. To be perfect he must have not only Christ, but also the divine nature, he must partake of the glory of Christ. Therefore, the Lord says to him, Sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and come and follow me, and thou shalt have treasure in the heavens—part with all in and through the cross, and then out of the heavenly treasure give to him that needeth, and so payment is made.

22. He went away sorrowing. Why so? Was it that he thought of his goods? Or rather, was it that he now could not have that for which he had spent his whole life without the sacrifice? He observed the law of his God, that he might obtain eternal life—another and better life. Are we, then, to suppose that his ideas were confined to his goods? He, who could so answer the Lord concerning his past life, could, as many literalists have done, give up all and feed the poor. Has he observed the

law of his God from his youth upwards? Has he a belief in the incarnation, of which there is no doubt? And does he desire another and better life than this? He has in all these a greater possession among men than goods and chattels. Therefore Jesus said, If thou wilt be perfect. This the covenant demands; and every true scribe seeks this as he warns every man, and teaches every man *in all wisdom*, that he may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. (Col. i. 28.)

If a rich man could be perfect by parting with his goods and feeding the poor, he would obtain eternal life at a cheap rate: he would obtain a common salvation on an exclusive ground: yea, for him Christ died in vain.

Here the great Teacher of man shows what the covenant demands; yea, what the cross demands. In "the unmerciful servant," the man who had nothing wherewith to pay, was to be sold and his wife and children. The rich man, who has plenty, must also part with all. By Christ crucified, we are crucified to this world, and this world to us. Though in the world we are not of it, "but we walk before God in the land of the living." The Lord teaches the obligation to carry his cross, and asks, If a man gain the whole world, what does it profit him? What can he give in exchange for his soul? A man may, in the honest industry of a past life, gain not only vast possessions, but the whole world, and he may give it all to feed the poor, and what does it profit him? Ah! we have yet to learn the cross of Christ. What is this life, according to the world's highest type, such as we see in this young man? He calls Jesus, Good Master. He is led to see that this epithet implies that he is God—God Incarnate, the central truth of all religious systems—and he is ready to believe *any doctrine* that may flow out of it. *All this* devils believe, and tremble. He has lived a life following the commandments of God from his youth up; he has serious thoughts of another and better life. Now, strange as it may appear, the cross of Christ demands the surrender of all these, "for he that does not hate his life shall lose it." What honour, what respect this man must have had in the world—rich and liberal, honest, just, and true; possessing all that the world can give in religion, education, and possessions—and it can give a great deal—and disciplining himself accordingly; yet he sees not in it all the deceit-

fulness of sin and the desperate wickedness of the heart. But, if he will be perfect, instead of making one step towards this condition, he has gone farther away. If he will be perfect, he must carry the cross, he must sell all that he has—crucify nature's feelings and affections, *put off the old nature altogether*, not only houses and lands, but brothers and sisters, father and mother, wife and children, yea, his life also, for the name of Christ. How simple is the truth if we would but part with our conceits. All that savours of man is only an abomination with God; as Paul also says, All that man can glory in—and he could glory in as much as this young man—he counted loss for Christ; yea, he counted all as dung that he might win Christ, and be found in him. More, he took pleasure in infirmities, in necessities, in reproaches, in distresses, in persecutions, for Christ's sake; for when he was weak then was he strong, and he could do all things through Christ, who strengthened him. The world may develop its civilization, but it is one gigantic lie. It would deprive us of the cross of Christ. It would give anything and everything but to learn Christ.

He went away sorrowing, for he had many possessions. He understood not the rich inheritance he had in Jehovah—in the kingdom of the heavens. Jesus now says to his disciples, How hardly—with what difficulty—shall a rich man enter into the kingdom of the heavens. As a rich man, he is possessed of all that this life can give him; then, there is not only the attractive power of earthly things, but the enlarged desires, which increase despite of him, presenting a greater obstacle than when without these things.

24. Jesus explains the difficulty by a figure, one that is possible and reasonable. A camel entering the eye of a needle can have no parabolic teaching. But we can understand it when this expression signifies the camel entering by one of the smaller gates on either side of the large one into an Eastern city. This is the opinion of a distinguished traveller, and if he knew only of one place where the smaller gate was so called, it would be enough, and we should leave it to others to prove the negative. The Lord did not intend, literally, what he said; if so, it would have rendered his pointed remarks and the disciple's reply meaningless. He would say that it was easier for the sumpter camel to

pass into the city through the narrow gate—as, in doing so, it would get rid of its pack or burden, notwithstanding its fastenings—than for the rich man to enter the narrow gate into the kingdom of God, for he knows not, he understands not, that he is burdened and heavy laden.

The disciples, taking the very letter of his words, failed to perceive the essential truth which the camel entering the narrow gate taught; and then, regarding the rich man according to his character—so different to the blustering fishermen of Galilee—as rich in many things, highly esteemed among men, exclaimed, Who, then, can be saved?

26. Jesus, looking at them, doubtless with pain, and in sorrow, replied, With men this cannot be; but with God all things can. Does he not here take them back to his former severe reproof (ch. xvi. 23), however it may be tempered with sorrow, because of the hardness of their hearts?

27. Not only did he look them through, but his words pierced to their inmost thoughts and discerned them, and so called forth Peter's exclamation. Answering the Lord, he said, Behold, we have left all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?

What an unveiling is here of the human heart! It cannot contemplate a power, a mighty power, that holds in subjection an invisible world of spirits, but seeks in its ambition, and so is an instrument of those spirits, to dominate over man, even over God's heritage. Whosoever exalteth himself shall be humbled—now, in the grace of God, under the mighty hand of God; or, hereafter, in the judgment of God. The disciple is not above his Master, but he that is perfect shall be as his Master, who came not to be ministered unto but to minister. The minister of Christ is the servant of all men, and to desire other than this is not only to be on a slippery place, but to be a servant of sin.

The disciple says, We have left all and followed thee. Had they? Can we say they had? If we were to take the command to the young man, literally, to sell all he had, then Peter was right—they had left their ships, their houses, their wives and their children, their fathers and their mothers; yet, were strangers to the cross of Christ, were hard-hearted and full of all wickedness, as they strove, brother with brother, to be greatest in the kingdom of the heavens. His words are a contradiction. If they had left all

and followed him, why should they ask for anything more? The young man was directed to sell all, and he would have a treasure in heaven; to follow Jesus implies this. But the words were a temptation for the Lord Jesus to settle their disputes. When ambition drives a man on, and especially in religious things, it is, in all its demeaning qualities, inexorable. It is a curse, and insatiable, and nothing but the cross will truly deal with it. Jesus reads their hearts, and does not answer according to their desire, but says unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye who have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the *throne* of his *glory*, ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

He replies to them all, and especially to Peter, who would be the greatest. Now, what is the throne of glory, but all the power of royalty, and all the fulness of Deity? What more, then, than this can be desired? He, then, who has first trusted in Christ, is sealed with the Spirit as the earnest of this inheritance; or, as Peter, who, after conversion, for he never forgot this scene, says, I am a witness of his sufferings, and partaker of his glory. (1 Pet. v. 1.) To ask for more than this is to prefer the creature to the Creator. However, the Lord does not answer them as they expect, but he does answer them. As twelve, they express the covenant imparted to all men. And the purpose of God is twelve thrones for twelve men. So, then, it is said, Ye which have followed me, in the generation, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. That these words could not have a direct literal and exclusive application to these twelve is evident, for Judas was one of them, and he was "a child of the devil," and went to his own place. There is no difference, no pre-eminence for one over others. All who shall inherit the glory of the Redeemer shall be one with the Father, with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning. He is no respecter of persons. All will be filled. The greater the capacity the greater the weight of glory. We shall then be one with Christ, and heirs with him of his glory; and we shall judge the twelve tribes of Israel—sit in judgment with him over all principality and power that would exalt itself against all that is called God. Thus we leave all and follow him. We might suppose

that the words of Jesus were effectual in bringing these men to a right mind, but we shall see they were not, as he continues to address himself to Peter, and afterwards particularly to the two sons of Zebedee.

29. He first explains more fully the "following" of the preceding verse. Not only will they possess the power of Christ in judging, but in the Son of God they will receive a hundredfold in those relations which they have surrendered for his name's sake, with life eternal. Here is the answer to the young man. He was to sell all and give to the poor "for the name's sake" of Christ, the Son of the living God. And although Peter, in his question, might draw a comparison between himself, or the twelve for the sake of himself, and the young man that went away sorrowing, yet he has the solemn warning that many that are now first, many of those twelve, shall be last, and the now last, first. Who are the now first? but they who are *visibly* with their Lord, and who expect to be on the throne of his glory, and to be first on it? They have been on the visible and tangible mount, have seen the excellent glory, but do not see their own inward desire for pre-eminence. They first may be last. And what is this? but to be judged and condemned of those who, now last, shall be first. And who are these now last? but they who, though they may go away sorrowing, may yet repent, and so do their Lord's bidding, and will, then, with him, sit on the twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

One may forgive a brother seven times, yet have no idea of sin. So, men pray for the forgiveness of sins, yet strive not with sin. Having so prayed, they go away, forgetting what manner of men (generation) they are; but what is the condition of their heart before God? The Word has revealed to them the truth; they assent to it, but they continue not in the perfect law of liberty. This perfect law is love. It is the operating principle of the divine nature—of the penny (chap. xx. 8—10). This the disciples had not, for they were a faithless and perverse *generation*.

What a solemn warning is this to us all! Let us, then, have no morbid sentimentality about the men before us; but let us sit at the feet of Jesus, and learn of him.

CHAPTER XX.

1 FOR the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that* is an householder, which
2 went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And
3 when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into
4 his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others
5 standing idle in the market-place, and said unto them, Go ye also into the
6 vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their
7 way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.
8 And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle,
9 and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto
10 him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into
11 the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, *that* shall ye receive. So when even
12 was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers,
13 and give them *their* hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when
14 they came that *were hired* about the eleventh hour, they received every man a
15 penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have
16 received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when
17 they had received *it*, they murmured against the goodman of the house,
18 saying, These last have wrought *but* one hour, and thou hast made them
19 equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. But he
20 answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not
21 thou agree with me for a penny? Take *that* thine is, and go thy way: I
22 will give unto this last even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do
23 what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the
last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

17 AND Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the
18 way, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of
19 man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they
20 shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock,
21 and to scourge, and to crucify *him*: and the third day he shall rise again.

20 Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worship-
21 ping *him*, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What
22 wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the
23 one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. But
Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink
of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that
I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto

them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with : but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared of my Father.

24 And when the ten heard *it*, they were moved with indignation against the
25 two brethren. But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, Ye know that the
princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are
26 great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you :
27 but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister ; and
28 whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant : even as the
Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give
his life a ransom for many.

29 And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him. And,
30 behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus
passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* son of David !
31 And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace :
but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* son of
32 David ! And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye
33 that I shall do unto you ? They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be
34 opened. So Jesus had compassion *on them*, and touched their eyes : and
immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.

1. To say that "this parable stands in the closest connexion with the last four verses of the preceding chapter, and can be only rightly understood by their help," is an implied admission that an unbroken connexion is not followed—the neglect of which is to be as in a vessel without a helm ; for if a man does inwrap himself in his own conceits, he is driven by every wind of doctrine, as he is dependent for his interpretation on the universal, not consent, but dissent of the past. It is also remarked, "that the actual division of the chapters is here peculiarly unfortunate, often causing the parable to be explained quite independently of the context ;" whereas, the division of other chapters would much more, if they were in the least noticed, impede the interpretation ; for it is not in any division, but in the connexion of *spiritual* truths, that the sense is to be followed and discovered.

We are frequently reminded of the difficulties of Scripture—difficulties as besetting this or that portion of the Word. But Matthew, as he unfolds the covenant of God in the past, and now fully revealed, never speaks of or implies any such difficulties. And a scribe built up into the kingdom of the heavens is able,

out of his treasure, to give it forth, at the same time laying under tribute all nature and providence; yea, and all science; for there is no created law but what is ancillary to the laws of the everlasting kingdom of the heavens. Instead, then, of admitting difficulties, the Scripture reproves men for being babes, requiring milk, when they ought to be of full age, and partaking of strong meat; for they understand not the first principles of the doctrine of Christ,—respecting which Christendom is now divided.

This parable, in its importance, is second to none. Indeed, it is first of all, since it sifts the claims of the most confident professor, at the close of a long religious career, to the everlasting reward of the kingdom, when the first may be last, and the last first.

The true scribe, the true minister, does not drive away what is before him; but as the Spirit brooded over chaos, so does Jesus now, despite the chaos and confusion, bring out into bold relief the beauty, harmony, and glory of the covenant.

The Lord's presence with the twelve, as outwardly representing what he is invisibly doing with all men, stands distinct and independent of the faith, or condition of the heart, of any man. Then, it is quite possible for him to speak of his disciples as of the kingdom. Outwardly, they were so; *yet inwardly they were only evil.*

This parable is particularly addressed to Peter, and so to all men. It is addressed to him, not because Jesus regarded him as first, but because he and others regarded him as such. He had confessed to the Christ, the Son of the living God: but he did not understand the nature of his confession, and it was only after his conversion that he bore testimony, and declared that Jesus was made both Christ and Lord; and in the experience of these appellations, his true confession was, "I am a witness of his sufferings, and a partaker of his glory." But now it is against him and his idea of the confession, that the truth vindicates itself; and so, against the errors of all men, and especially of religious men, are the parables of the unmerciful servant and the labourers in the vineyard directed.

What shall be said of that teaching that would separate these two parables, seeing not the close vital union between them? It is a great mistake. Hence Christendom is divided into two

divisions, tending more or less to two extremes, which are evidently one in error, yet capable of being one in truth. On the one side are they who profess Christ in a strict asceticism, yet ignore the true life; on the other, they who desire the true life in the Spirit, yet ignore the preceding and indispensable condition—a clean heart in Christ. In the former, there is a false humility; in the latter, spiritual pride. However, did they but see the necessity of the two truths in Christ and the Spirit, and obey them in their relative order, their confession would be the expression of Christ, the Son of the living God, from the heart.

In the former parable the salient truth is, as we have seen, the mercy of God setting a man free in redemption, realised in his parting with all. In this is the heavenly treasure—the divine life, the glory of the Father, the inheritance of all men in Christ. Having first trusted in Christ we are sealed with the Spirit of promise—the earnest of our inheritance. (Eph. i. 12, 13, 15—18.)

The kingdom of the heavens—the covenant—is like unto a man, a householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

In the former parable, it was a king: here, it is a householder—Father. As a King, God executes judgment against all that is not of himself; as a Father, he blesses with all that is. So he looks for fruit. (Is. v. 7.) He hires labourers, who are to work the ground and tend the plants, that they may yield fruit. Whoever, then, is called into this vineyard of the Lord of Hosts, is called to possess in himself that which will indeed constitute him first. He will be one with Christ the Son of God. He will savour of the things that be of God. So he will bring into subjection the ground; he will bring under his body; he will carry his cross; then will it receive the true seed—the true *right hand* plant which will bring forth fruit. Working in this vineyard, his fruit will be as Peter afterwards testified, “Silver and gold have I none, *but such as I have give I unto thee.*”

The unrighteous steward, unrighteous in himself, and faithless to his fellow-man—for how can any give who is without faith to God—is somewhat an illustration of this parable. He says, at the close of his day, I cannot dig: to beg I am ashamed.

The time is now passed for bringing into subjection his old Adam nature. He has not learned—he knows not Christ. Then,

to beg, to ask for the divine life, he is ashamed. Though the disciples, in this parable, would express themselves in a different manner—would say, we have digged and followed Jesus, and are not ashamed to ask—yet, we shall see that the gift or reward is to them no more than it was to the unrighteous steward; since they, not having truly digged, cannot appreciate or enjoy it. It was the constant desire of Paul to magnify Christ in his body, whether by life or by death; but these, self-deceived, thought they had already left all—had already done what the rich young man declined to do. In him, we see the earnest observer of an outward religion; but here, the impetuous swearing fisherman, who had changed his outward life, and whose lips had confessed to the truth—simply the opposite of the other—both, as without the true faith, strangers to mercy and to love.

Labourers are called into the vineyard. All men are called. The relationships of life, the laws of nature, providence, and science—all, as ancillary to the Word of life, are continually calling, even as the Lord Jesus called his disciples, to the possession of those principles, by which they enter and realise the fact that they are working in the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts. However, the householder himself is calling, as his Word reveals eternal truths—he is calling all men to obey what is. The Word not only brings man into account, and bids him sell all, *but also to receive the reward of a faithful working.*

The householder agrees for a penny. The denarius and drachma are the same coin, of which these are the Latin and Greek terms. The penny is the inheritance—the fulness of the abundant blessing, incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us; and of which the Spirit is now the earnest. So, then, our whole life must be, in respect of it, a continual digging—winning of Christ. Thus, as workmen, we realise our covenant relation; we recognise the condition necessary to be in the vineyard—we dig, work, put off the old nature—so sell all—houses, lands, wife, children, father, and mother—yea, our own life also. In Christ, all is put off; and, so, in the Son of God is the penny, the inheritance, a true reward of working. There is a vast difference between the flesh working, and Christ crucified working. This is ever the overthrow, the subjugation of that; if not, we are without Christ. There may

be a knowledge, according to the intellect, and a confession with the lip, with an outward forsaking of all, yet Christ crucified be not there. Many glibly exclaim, "It is not of works, but all of grace," and yet are strangers to the truths they express—even Christ the Son of God in the heart, and in the life.

Most true is it, from the very nature of things, that we, in "our precious faith," and working according to it, are neither *barren nor unfruitful* in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet. i. 1, 8), but bring forth the fruits of judgment and of righteousness. Precious, indeed, is this vineyard in which we work, for it is none other than Christ Jesus, in whom, and by whom, we work, and in whom we increase in all knowledge and in all virtue, that our faith, purged and purified in the fire of his holiness, may be at his appearing to his praise and glory.

Working in this vineyard, we continually bear about in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be manifested in us. This is the fruit: and the more that Christ is magnified in us, the more is the life manifested to the glory of God. But since the nature and condition of this working are not understood, difficulties and confusion are the result. We must work else there is no reward. We must work *for the Spirit*; and we "must now work while it is called day; for the night cometh, when no man can work." Our work, then, is a continual winning of Christ; that, being found *in him*, we may have the righteousness which is of God. This is the reward. We must make effective the one truth, to which the unmerciful servant was a stranger. Then, when we have escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust, we are made partakers of the divine nature. (2 Pet. i. 4.)

Paul well understood the calling of God from on high in Christ Jesus (Phil. iii. 14)—the Gospel of the glory of Christ (2 Cor. iv. 4); of which Peter speaks, as he says, "I am a witness of his sufferings—for he that suffers in the flesh hath ceased from sin—and a partaker of his glory." Therefore, Paul put off the things which savoured of man. He counted the glory of man but as dung; wherefore he forgot the things which were behind, and pressed forward to the prize of the calling of God from on high. We can thus understand his contempt for all that man can boast of, which is only an abomination before

God ; and how truly he renounced it that he might win Christ, and, *being found in him*, possess the prize, the reward, the righteousness of God by faith.

To this working in the vineyard some are called at the first, third, sixth, ninth, and eleventh hour of the day. Now the covenant stands, and it is with all flesh. God, then, is always calling, but the labourer *truly* enters the vineyard only when Christ crucified is a reality in his heart. And this is so only from the very nature of things. Christ Jesus is the vineyard, in whom and through whom only can we yield the fruits of it. How awful, then, is the responsibility of him who, as the minister of God, would call men into the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts ! How necessary is it that the trumpet should give no uncertain sound ! They who enter at these early hours are blessed, and increase in knowledge. And if they have improved their opportunities they will understand how all things work together for their good. They will not talk of the heat and burden of the day, much less murmur at another partaking of the same prize, but yearn with bowels of mercy that their joy in the Holy Ghost may be fulfilled.

7. When it came to the last hour of the day, the Householder went out and found men standing idle—not working, yet ready to work. He asks them, why stand ye idle all the day ? They answer, No man hath hired us. What a reproach upon those who call themselves the ministers of Christ ; who, as these men, high in position, ignorant of the truth, do not understand this reproach. Men are now standing in the market-place ready to be hired, but the trumpet gives an uncertain sound ; for the truth, the one only standard of perfection in Christ Jesus, according to the everlasting covenant, is not taught. No untempered zeal in such things as are outward in their tendencies can compensate for this. “No man has hired us.” Let no mawkish sentimentality remove the awful responsibility lying upon those who profess the Word of God. The Householder himself, by his own Word, calls them ; they obey, they enter, they work, and they receive the reward. The Lord Jesus has given these men the keys of the kingdom, and with them the power to bind and to loose, as he taught in the parable of the unmerciful servant, as, that the man, his wife, and children, are bound and sold. All that is here

of the creature is bound, that the soul may be loosed and possess the reward.

8. So then, when even was come—which time respects rather the close of each man's life than the end of successive lives, and every man's life as at one and the same time—the Steward, who is Christ the Lord, gives to every one according to his hire. He begins with the last, and gives to him the reward. Why with the last? Do we understand the covenant of God? for it is it which directs it. Have we learned it from the first, second, or third hour? The more we know of it the less we shall think of ourselves, and the more we shall think of others. It is truth, and so the Lord Jesus respects the covenant, and, in the patient waiting of the truth, there is even then an enlarging of the capacity of our soul, as there is also an increasing joy in the Lord. He who is most like Christ is servant of all. It is a true humility that allows the little ones to go first. They with the reward are first. They possess the Son of God, who is first in the kingdom. And there is joy in heaven, joy in the bosom of the everlasting Parent, that these last are thus first, thus blessed. But there is one who has said, I have left all, and followed thee; what shall I have therefore? Does he know what it is to follow Jesus, to witness to his sufferings now, that he may enter into the full blessing of his glory hereafter, and be like him; to sit with him on the twelve thrones, judging the tribes of Israel? If he does, he would know something of himself, he would know something of the mercy and love of his King and Father. He would feel that his whole life should be one continual effort to empty himself of himself in Christ, for the unspeakable honour and glory that awaits the true follower of the Lord. Man's ways are not God's ways. How different are the best of things from man's point of view and from God's!

10. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. The covenant stands. The fulness of its blessings abounds to every man. And it is for every man to be identified with it, to be one with it, in a condition according to it. But it is true that they fail, for they come supposing that they should receive more. But they receive every one a penny. And when they received it they murmured. Here the Lord lifts the veil of the future, and

shows, that as the tree falls so it lies. There is no change in this awful condition, which is here so vividly pictured. When they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, against the everlasting Father; for there is none good but one, and that is God. He is the Householder. They murmur against the everlasting covenant. And this is no slight matter, as we shall presently see. Satan, in all his subtle working, is unfathomable. He would, by a friend, beguile the Lord Jesus to break the covenant, and not cast him out—violate the eternal purpose of a Triune God. He still blinds the disciples, for the glory of their God has not yet shone into them. Men come into the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts, and they have not a single eye to the glory of God; no, they mind earthly things. They do not seek that power which casts down all the power of the enemy, that the soul may be filled with the fulness of God; but they have a desire for something beside it. If our desire be not for the fulness of God, if our heart be not athirst for the living God, then the desire, however insignificant it may be to some, is only a willing receptivity to sin. It is to be one with Satan, and so lust conceives.

12. The expression of this murmuring spirit is remarkable. They are not trifling words. They express an awful truth—the condition of those who stand face to face with the throne and glory of the Eternal One—for they murmured when they had received the penny. They say, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. Does Satan here, in the heart of man, deny the Person of the Steward? No; for he says, THOU hast made them, &c. Does he deny the grace of God? No; for he says, Thou hast *made* them, &c. There is, then, in this murmuring, not only a tacit confession to the Person of the Steward and to his grace, but an implied declaration that that grace has worked; for they say, These last have worked but one hour, and we have borne the heat and burden of the day, and thou hast made them equal unto us. Where, then, are we to perceive the broad line of demarcation which the Lord presently traces up to its original? It is simply spiritual pre-eminence in the kingdom of God for which they murmur. Is not this the history of the creature against the covenant from the beginning

to its glorious consummation? Do not these words indicate the spirit that drove the brightest of the heavenly host out of heaven, and will also deprive the first among men of the same blessed inheritance? What are our murmurings now in the perfect providence of God? Do we know what it is to sell all and follow Jesus, and so, out of the heavenly treasure, to give to him that needs? Do we know what it is to count all the glory of man, all that the creature can boast of, all that this world can give, but as dung that we may win Christ? Do we know what it is to possess in Christ the earnest of our glorious inheritance, and for which we can cheerfully suffer the loss of all things? If not, we shall and will murmur, and the condition of our heart will be one, though it may regard only earthly things, with these who here murmur against the goodman of the house.

13. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? He answered one of them, and through him all. He answers every man in the depths of his own heart. He is every man's Friend, one that sticks closer than any brother. It is the highest, the noblest relationship of all. He changes not. Whatever be the wrong-doing of man, he is the same, and if man will, despite his friendship, go his own way, he reaps the fruit of his own doing. But what does this murmuring imply when he says, I do thee no wrong? Does it not seek to exalt itself above all that is good? Does it not seek to make that which is good only evil? Didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Every man agrees for this. His very being, existence, and support of it, and all his surroundings bear witness that he is in covenant relation with God; then, how truly so is it with those who admit it! Take that thine is, and go thy way. He has already received it, and murmurs. However, he is told to take it; but he does not value it; therefore, has no hold of it. While he is invited to take it he finds that, from the nature of things, *he cannot*. Are we, then, to expect a condition hereafter different to that which we now possess? We are ever invited to lay hold of the covenant, and take that which is ours. So Paul writes, Fight the good fight of faith, agonise the good agony of faith—this we do in Christ—and *lay hold of eternal life*. This is the very matter of the parable, "What *shall I do* that I may have eternal life?" If, then, we have used this

mortal life, according to the covenant, in attaining the eternal inheritance, what more do we require? But we, being bound by Satan, instead of our binding Satan, cannot fight, cannot agonise, and so cannot lay hold of eternal life; and hereafter, when we shall awake to our true condition, we shall *not be able* to "take that which is ours," and so be last instead of first.

The blessing is every man's; but if he does not truly work in the vineyard, how can he take what is his? "Take that thine is, and go thy way." If he can take it, he will go according to it, he will sit as the first on the twelve thrones; but if he cannot, he will go the way of the last—he will "depart sorrowing."

I will give unto this last even as unto thee. When we consider the gift, what a humiliating reproach is here. The last has the *same* gift, and he with it is first, while the first is last. Are not God's ways equal? Are not man's unequal? Here, moreover, is an awful intimation that they who would, on some exclusive ground, claim a spiritual pre-eminence over their fellow-men, are of this spirit. On the one side are those who, not denying the grace of God, yet in the old nature, working as it talks of the heat and burden of the day, would claim spiritual pre-eminence, but, failing the cross of Christ, murmur; on the other are those who stand upon some elective preference, as if the gift was only for the first and not for the last—a prejudice which Peter himself was most reluctant, even to the last, to part with. Both and all are reproved in the words, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" Thus, in Peter, are gathered up the two extremes of professing Christendom—those who are called workers of the flesh, and those who rest in high doctrine.

15. We now come to the concluding words of this parable—words as deep, as important, and bearing as awful a warning as any to be found in the Word of God.

They were spoken by Jesus to Peter—Is thine eye evil, *because* I am good? They are the words of the covenant, of him who was given a covenant to the people, and they are for all to whom they are applicable. Jesus has already stated that there is none good but God, who is the Householder; but here it is the Steward who calls himself good. He is, therefore, God. This appellation here is the same as in the Old Testament, and it is in the original Elohim—the covenant ones—the Trinity. Thus the

Lord, in the application of this epithet to himself, takes us back to the beginning—the everlasting purpose of a Triune God—to reveal a Father, as revealed in the Son, and the imparting of his own nature to man, that he may be exalted high in the glory of the Father. This is the covenant, the reward of a faithful working in the vineyard, in Christ Jesus. The covenant, then, is man's birthright, it is his own inheritance. But *because* of this the eye is evil (*πονηρος*).

It was Satan who first sinned in heaven, and it was because of the covenant—because of the purpose of the Father to crown man, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, with honour and glory. (Heb. ii. 7 : Ps. viii. 5.) Satan then rose up in a spirit of pride claiming pre-eminence, and so would destroy the will of the Father, and exalt himself over him. There is all the difference between some angels claiming pre-eminence, and others saying, we have never transgressed at any time thy commandment. (Luke xv. 29.) The former is sin in antagonism to the will of the Father, so would destroy the Paternity; the latter is holiness expressing itself in antagonism to sin.

We have already referred to the nature of the fall, which may be clearly gathered from many parts of Scripture, and which men instinctively fight against, as they see others usurp or unlawfully strive for superiority. What is Israel's triumph over the king of Babylon, but Christ's triumph over the great oppressor? Thus the prophet writes, Hell from beneath is moved for to meet at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the *chief* ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the *kings* of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. Well might the prophet exclaim, contemplating that bright angelic being first in the glory of a Triune God, now a loathsome mass of corruption—How art thou fallen from heaven, O day-star, son of the morning!—the first witness to the Paternity—how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken nations! He now feels the power of the mighty arm of Jehovah. He had said in his heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. If he is the day-star, the son

of the morning, who are the other stars above whom he would exalt his throne, but they who are first? He does not stop here. He says, I will sit *also* upon the mount of the congregation, *in the sides of the north*. He will take the right hand of the Father, the place of Christ. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. How much higher can he go? It is infinitude. He can go no higher; as he says, I will be like the Most High. (Is. xiv. 9—14.) Cursed ambition! Who can in this fearfully graphic description mistake the nature of sin? Who can mistake it, if he only rightly contemplate the cross of Christ? who, in that accursed death, was cast out from the presence of his God (Ps. xxii. 1), being made sin for us. And since we have an evil eye, what will be our lot hereafter, if now, in this our opportunity, we know not what it is to cry for mercy of the Son of David! Here, then, we see how it is that evil arises because of the goodness of God. But it is to Peter that these words, "Is thine eye evil, because I am good," were addressed. The eye is the Lord's favourite symbol for the soul. Instead, then, of the soul being redeemed, set loose from all that is of sin, that it may possess the fulness of the Father in the Son—the reward, it is only evil. How important is it, then, that every one who ministers in holy things, should, apart from the various and conflicting interpretations of this parable, take care that his heart is according to the covenant, else he will now lord over God's heritage, and hereafter murmur, seeing those whom he has regarded as last first in the kingdom.

Among many dangerous statements is that which regards the evil eye as "the admixture of the old man," as if in the nature of things, whatever be the profession and confession, there could be any admixture at all. Even a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. Christ cannot divide the heart, for what is not of faith is sin. And thus the blessed Redeemer teaches his servant and us what is the working of the vineyard, and what the reward. He before said to Peter, who would restrain him from doing the Father's will, from casting out Satan, Get behind me, Satan. And now, he not only sees Satan working in the heart of his professed follower, but warns him that he, at the close of his career, though now first, doing many wonderful things in his name, will be last. And so we have learned how it is that the last are first—they carry the cross of Christ. Yet, alas! though many are called, they,

professing to have obeyed, will then find that they are not chosen.

17. He is going up to Jerusalem. He calls the twelve apart. In them the same spirit of evil is discovered as in Peter and the sons of Zebedee. They, as the twelve, represent all men in the covenant; but how shall they sit on twelve thrones, if it be not made effective in them?

He is going up to Jerusalem as the Christ, the true King—the Son of David. His going up typically implies that he has already suffered, since his entrance into the holy city is the prelude of his entrance into glory. The importance of bearing in mind this truth in its order will appear in some verses following, as he departs from Jericho, the accursed city. The simple announcement, “We go up to Jerusalem,” should have called forth the triumphant pæan:—Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors; and *the King of Glory* shall come in. Who is the King of Glory? Jehovah strong and mighty; Jehovah mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is the King of Glory? Jehovah of hosts, he is the King of Glory.

The going up to Jerusalem is twice mentioned. What, then, is the distinctive truth here signified. He sends his disciples back to the Word of the Householder, which is ever calling men into the vineyard. If we bear in mind how the whole invisible kingdom of God, and how the whole Word as revealing it, were before the mind of Jesus, we may imagine somewhat of the fulness of the expression, “Behold, we go up to Jerusalem.” He has just told them that in the regeneration—and what this is, will appear in connexion with his going up to Jerusalem—they, who follow him, shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Much, indeed, is said of Jerusalem; but what is our idea of it? What should it be? What is the Lord’s? What is it according to his Word, to which he sends us, who should be scribes established—built up in it—and to whom he gives the keys to bind and to loose?

Isaiah writes what he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. It is the mountain of the Lord’s house (ii. 1), a pregnant phrase. The mountain is as the *holiness* of God: no one can ascend it but

he who is according to it; and the house is the place where he dwelleth, where his *righteousness* shineth forth: for Jehovah is our righteousness. This holiness goeth forth as a lamp that burneth: it is judgment—salvation—that righteousness may come forth as brightness in all the glory of the divine nature.

Such must be the watchmen whom Jehovah sets upon the walls of Jerusalem, who, according to the covenant, hold not their peace, nor rest, till Jerusalem is a praise in the earth. And the covenant testifies how that Jehovah hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength, that he will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies, and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for *which thou hast laboured*. How simple, how full, are these truths to the understanding heart! We have here the bread and the wine; and we perceive what is the distinctive truth in labouring for the wine—labouring in the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts. They who gather the corn—the bread, which is Christ's holiness, judgment—shall eat it, possess it, then in the Spirit will they praise Jehovah; and they that have brought the wine together—which is, the Spirit poured out—shall drink it; but they shall drink it in the courts of his holiness. (Is. lxii. 6—9.)

If, then, we go up to Jerusalem—to the mountain of Jehovah—to the house of the Elohim of Jacob, in whom his Spirit dwells—he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion, out of the sunny, the glorious mount, will go forth the law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. (Is. ii. 1—3.) But what does the prophet say of Jerusalem—the faithful city, the type of the true, which is the mother of us all? She, as the daughter of Jerusalem, is the true bride. (Ps. xlv. ii.) The faithful city is full of judgment; righteousness dwells in her, and she bears children accordingly. She may transgress, become a harlot, full of murderers; but she shall receive double for all her transgressions. She shall be redeemed with *judgment*, and her *converts* with *righteousness*. (Is. i. 21, 27.) The going up, then, to Jerusalem is his going up to his bride, to make her meet for the marriage feast. Though fallen, though sunken and debased, trampled under foot and degraded, her King and her Lord will encircle her with the garments of salvation—with the robe of righteousness.

How can we compress in a few words the wondrous things written of Jerusalem? She is the vineyard, for the Bride and Bridegroom are one; both are full of judgment, both are full of righteousness. (Is. lxi. 10.) So truly are they who receive the reward those that truly work in the vineyard; for they obey the command, "Go up to Jerusalem; go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people. Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord. (Is. lxii. 10, 11.)

He is going up into Jerusalem. What, then, is the generation of them that seek him? of them that would follow him into Jerusalem? of them that would ascend the hill of Jehovah, and stand in his holy place—for they say we have left all and followed thee—but they who have clean hands, and a pure heart (Ps. xxiv. 4)—pure within, and clean without—Christ crucified a reality within, demonstrated in the life (chap. xvi. 24). Such are opposed to the evil eye; they do not lift up their souls to vanity. Jesus calls his disciples to him, and so takes them apart. If they follow him, they take his way—his portion—the one pathway to the thrones.

He tells them that he will be betrayed, and thus shows them how that, notwithstanding all that he has done proleptically, and attested by his own baptism—notwithstanding their confession, and his patient, considerate teaching—they yet savoured of the things that be of man, and not those that be of God: and thus, in their betrayal of a Friend, they might see the evil eye—the abomination of their own hearts—for every man is on the side of the enemy, and will betray him until he takes his yoke upon him. Not only his professed and visible followers, but also those who rested in the law, and the works of it—the visible hierarchy, and the scribes, the teachers of the law—would seek to put him to death. And they would deliver him to the Gentiles, who would mock him, scourge him, crucify him: they would mock him as a king; scourge him as a slave—being made sin for us; as it is written, Mine ears hast thou opened (Ps. xl. 6)—crucify him as a malefactor. He would suffer the *servile supplicium* with all its

attendant indignities, yet he despised the shame. Such is sin, which men so faithfully serve, and which, uncrucified in the heart, is ever in unceasing hostility to the gracious purpose of the Father.

But he tells them, that he will rise again the third day. Had they left all and followed him? Would they work in the vineyard, and bear the heat and burden of the day? Do they yet understand what he is setting before them? (See Rom. vii. 4; and viii. 10.) Not only does Peter refer to these words of the Lord Jesus, where he says, Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps: who his own self bare our sins on the tree, that we, being dead to sins—not only ceasing from sin, but dead to sins—should live unto righteousness: by *whose stripes* we are healed (1 Pet. ii. 21 and 24); but also Paul exhorts us to have the same mind that was in Christ Jesus, who in the form of God, possessing his attributes and perfections, emptied himself, and took upon him the form of a slave, and being found in fashion as a man, became obedient to the death of the cross. When we possess this mind, which we can only as we possess Christ crucified in us, so shall we do all things without murmurings and disputings. (Phil. ii. 5—7 and 12.) Thus he teaches them the one thing needful. They must take up the cross and follow him. He became a slave that he might put away evil, wherefore God hath highly exalted him, that to him every knee should bow—all that is of man or of the creature shall submit, and then the soul, blessed with his reward, shall confess that he is Lord—for none can call Jesus, Lord, but by the Holy Ghost—to the glory of God the Father. (See chap. xxii. 43.)

20. We can hardly follow the ignorance of the carnal mind, or see the extent of folly to which a misapprehension of the teaching of the Lord Jesus leads men. The error of Peter is painfully evident, but what is to be said of those who would have the right hand and the left of Jesus in the kingdom? The two distinguished disciples, the sons of Zebedee, self-deceived, imagine that they are not desiring that position of pre-eminence so graphically described as the ambition of Peter, in Isaiah xiv. 12—14. Where is the difference in that spirit which murmurs at the providence of God, and in that which disputes with his brother for anything that is of the Father? Is it within the power of man to determine what God has provided for them that love

him? Has it ever entered the heart of man to conceive it? If, then, we would determine our hereafter, we despise the reward, we do not appreciate it.

Seeing Peter reproved, the two sons of Zebedee, with their mother, now approach the Lord Jesus. But what does Matthew signify by mentioning this fact? According to the Jewish law the woman simply represents the flesh (Lev. xii. 5)—the glory of the man; while man represents the true Spirit—the glory of God (1 Cor. xi. 7.) Hence the one is subject to the other in all things. (Eph. v. 24.) She comes worshipping him, and asks a certain thing. How strikingly expressive, yet solemnly instructive, is this scene thus pictured by Matthew, yet standing out in all its painful reality before the eye of the Redeemer. Oh! no: they would not go so far as Peter. They would not say that they had as yet followed Jesus, but they might say that they had left all. In their mother thus prostrating herself they might represent the flesh humbling itself; but true humility is in the putting off of the flesh in Christ. It is only so in being one with Christ crucified. Have we not here one of the most vivid of pictures that can be drawn of the deceitfulness of sin? Strangers yet to the true union, *oneness with Christ*, by whom alone sin is condemned and destroyed in the flesh, they come as the privileged ones who sit in the bosom of the Lord, but cannot rise above the affections and lusts of the old Adam nature; they savour yet of the things which be of man. Jesus asks, What will ye? She replies, That these *my* two sons may sit on thy right hand and on thy left, in thy kingdom. The Lord replies to the two disciples, as he regards *in them* the old Adam nature asking, saying, Ye know not what ye ask. That very nature is asking its own condemnation and destruction. They know not the one thing needful. They know not yet what it is to ask in his name. (John xvi. 23.) For whatsoever they ask the Father in his name, that he gives them. They do not, they have not asked in the name of Christ the Son of God, but they ask in the flesh, and so they have not. The sons of Zebedee, filled with the rooted prejudices of the Jews, which came forth in all their strength in Peter, that they were “the elect of God,” considered themselves as the most privileged, and therefore most distinguished, of that election. They believed that the twelve thrones were literally

twelve, and to be filled by the twelve. They could see only their little party. They were certain they would not betray the Lord, though all the rest might. They could not read the truth revealed by Christ the Son of the living God—the Son of man, in the midst of them. They could not see the glory of the covenant then more clearly revealed than it was amidst the twelve tribes of Israel, as it is still more in the whole earth, the middle wall of partition being broken down, and to which all visible things testify. They did not see that any place on the twelve thrones belonged to a condition of soul the very opposite they were exhibiting; and, further, they did not see that their very exclusiveness was placing them last instead of first.

The sons of Zebedee, not having forsaken father and mother, know not how to “covet the best gifts.” Is the right hand and the left in the kingdom of greater moment than securing the divine nature, manifesting itself in its never-failing law—love? But what do we see but murmuring and strife,—divines and politicians, soldiers and sailors, men of science and men of commerce, striving for what all cannot obtain, yet neglecting that which all can obtain. Men would exalt self. And what devio^{us} paths do they not take to accomplish their object? Misrepresentation and falsehood, and many hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition, too often accompany, if they are not inseparable from, the efforts made to obtain the earthly and perishing prize. It perishes in the very attainment of it. What gain is there, or can be, in a restless spirit of ambition? Have they, who have reached the summit, the last step in the ladder, a quieter conscience, a truer peace, a well grounded hope of the glory of God? Surely no: the demon spirit never ceases to enlarge itself, is never satisfied, and the more it has the more it desires. This was the spirit the two brothers were seeking to bring into the kingdom of the heavens. They would acknowledge him as the Son of David, sitting on his throne. And they desire to be on the right hand and the left of his throne. But would they be content? No: the evil eye expresses itself thus, “I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds: I will be like the Most High.” So they know not what they ask. Instead

of being first, they would be last. However, the Lord Jesus directs them.

He brings them to the point: there is now no evasion. Are ye able, he says, to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They reply, we are able. These words of Jesus do not express one and the same idea, much less are they to be taken in their literal sense, as that one was beheaded, and the other thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil. But here he addresses every true follower of his. Every one must drink of this cup, and be baptized with this baptism. What, then, is this cup which he drank to its dregs? He had to know sin, to know it in all its terrible reality and power. He was made sin for us; he was made it in all its reality. None of them as yet understood sin: they might see the abominations of the flesh, the murderous cruelty of the heathen, the fanaticism of their countrymen, or the treachery of their fellow-disciples; but they had yet to behold it in its naked reality in their own hearts. Then, what is this baptism but the putting away of this enmity under the mighty arm of Jehovah, in a true death and burial, in a true banishment into outer darkness—a true grave—a land desolate and uninhabited? Until Jesus had perfected this baptism for us, he was straitened in himself. When thus sin came forth in all its strength, was destroyed, then the fulness of God was the reward. Ye shall, indeed, drink of my cup; ye shall have a deep sense of sin, and know its condemnation in the flesh, and be baptized with my baptism. He, then, that will lay aside every weight and sin which doth so heavily beset us, and runs with patience the agony set before him, will continually experience this, though it be to resist unto blood striving against sin. (Heb. xii. 1 and 4.) This is the preparation of the Father. He, then, that has the mind which was in Christ Jesus, in all the reality of his baptism, will be exalted high in the glory of God the Father.

24. All had profited but little by the Lord's teaching. They are all alike; for the ten, when they heard it, were exceedingly angry. Peter and Judas are among them. They are all unmerciful servants: they soon forget to forgive a brother seven times. The covenant wants no such vindicators of its unchanging and eternal

principles. This is not the working in the vineyard. In no such temper of mind and heart will any man partake of the cup and baptism of Christ. Wherefore the Lord, perceiving the evil spirit working in them, calls the ten.

25. They, doubtless, felt that the desire of the two was selfishness; but they, themselves self-deceived, perceive not the same evil spirit, in all its strength, working within. Jesus points to the kings of the Gentiles, to those outside the pale of the true Church; he points to those who, instead of being illustrious types of the true King, shadows of the reality, merging themselves in the commonwealth, exercise dominion; and to the chief ones, who exercise their authority over men instead of over evil, for the commonwealth of man. They must not take them for their example, for according to such was not the nature of his kingdom. What are our strifes and contentions but the assumption of dominion and authority over men. However, we have but one Exemplar—the Son of David, whose sovereignty is not in exercising dominion over us, but in the subjugation of evil in us. Then was he, their minister, the servant of all, being offered up on the sacrifice and service of their faith. Then, if any would drink of his cup, would be baptized with his baptism, they would minister to and serve their brethren, to advance them high in the glory of God, even as the Son of man came not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many. Every man must carry his cross: he gave his life a ransom for all—the most degraded and depraved, as well as the most distinguished and dignified among men. Therefore, was every one to be ready to give his life a ransom. Peter, doubtless, led on the ten in their indignation: he obtained the stater, and gave it for his Master and himself; but he did not understand the import of so doing, and now he is distinctly taught its meaning. This tribute, or ransom, was paid by strangers, since the children were free. It recognises the fact, that we, through sin, are strangers to the kingdom and righteousness of God. However, the payment of this ransom removes the estrangement, and sets us free from all its consequences, and the soul realises its atonement in oneness with God. But how? In such a way only as it can be a reality in others. It is not, then, a payment to the Father, to satisfy what is called offended justice; but it

satisfies the holiness of God, in the putting away of sin. It delivers us from going down into everlasting darkness and corruption, that God may be favourable unto us, and render unto us his righteousness. (Job. xxxiii. 24, 26: Ps. xlix. 9.) Having, then, the ransom of our God, we are to show forth it towards others. As the Son of man gave his life a ransom for all, so are we to follow his steps. Instead, then, of rising up in indignation against another, whatever be the provocation, we are to seek to put away from him that which is enslaving him, when we shall find a power within ourselves that will cast down every high thought, and everything within us that would exalt itself against the knowledge, the indwelling knowledge of God.

29. Through this ransom a great multitude follow him. He died for all; and the grace of God, which bringeth salvation to all men, was in him manifested. (Titus ii. 11.) In his death he departs out of the accursed city—Jericho, the type of the world—to go up into Jerusalem. So his disciples, who carry his cross, are not of this world; and that multitudes follow him, is a testimony to the universal tendency of the truth, which he in all long-suffering mercy has again and again enforced. All, then, if they would follow him, must drink of his cup—be baptized with his baptism.

30. If we have followed the mind of our Evangelist, as he has brought out, in link after link, as in one chain, the everlasting covenant, we shall be able to contemplate with wonder and adoring gratitude the simple yet very instructive sign, or miracle, now before us. Here we would strongly express our disapprobation of that practice of blending the several accounts of any incident, and so giving one different from that which each writer severally intended; also, of that practice of assuming difficulties or errors, which is the result simply of taking our own ground, and twisting the Word to suit our own idiosyncrasy, instead of allowing it to give forth naturally its explanation. We are content with the narrative as we find it. The spiritual is the truth, which is evident to any one who will but consider it; in which only the mind of the writer is followed, and in which all difficulties vanish. Here, indeed, is one of those instances in which the Holy Spirit *plainly* indicates that the everlasting truths are not in the letter, which may be modified, and become

the vehicle of the spiritual, which is the truth. Some may object to the letter, because of historical discrepancies, scientific errors, or chronological inaccuracies. These may arise to suit the popular mind, whereby they become a more powerful engine for bringing the truth to bear upon the understanding of those who hear it.

Two blind men sitting by the way-side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David! Why does Matthew mention two, when Mark and Luke speak only of one? It would help us but little to say there were two, and that it was not contrary to truth to speak only of one. There is a discrepancy in respect to the locality or time in Luke, but we reserve our remarks on it. Then, were there two or one? Doubtless but one, upon which Matthew grounds his narrative. Here, it may be observed, we are admitting a principle that would destroy the truth of the historical fact. Not so; but the obvious discrepancies, if we took the letter, would.

The Lord gave his life a ransom. He is, therefore, on his way from the accursed city to Jerusalem—the city of the great King. He has redeemed all men; of whom he has chosen twelve, whom he has taught by his Word, and his works—the covenant. Of these twelve, as representing all men, three, as representing those who embrace this redemption, are set forth as the privileged ones, but they fail. The first, Peter, has an evil eye. Satan possesses his soul. The others would indicate that they had left all, and would follow Jesus so closely as to desire the right hand and the left hand in the kingdom; but they have the same evil eye. Though they do not say, We have left all, and followed thee, what shall we have, therefore? but, We have left all, and would follow thee into that glory which we saw on the mount, and sit on the twelve thrones, on thy right hand and on thy left, yet they have the same evil eye. Not one of them yet knows what it is to drink of the Lord's cup of trembling—they know not sin in them. Now the blind men are conscious of the evil eye. So they stand opposed to Peter, and, as two, they are opposed to the two sons of Zebedee. They are conscious of evil, of darkness, the flesh obstructing the light of the glory of God; they are bound by Satan, and they cry to the true King—they call upon the Son of David. They confess him as truly as Peter

did: they confess him the Lord and Christ. (Acts ii. 36.) They understand their condition; they seek the Christ, in whom they have mercy with judgment; whereby they are loosed, set free from that which was binding them in darkness and death, and in the Lord they have the reward.

It is the god of this world who blinds men—he blinded the disciples—lest the glory of the Gospel of God should shine unto them. The multitudes who followed Jesus out of Jericho, and so had, like the disciples, left all and followed Jesus, now, like them, showed their indignation, and rebuked the blind that they should hold their peace. How true it is that a spurious Christianity, a scheme or system, instead of Christ crucified lifted up in the heart, a reality demonstrated in the life, is ever ready to rebuke such! The disciples have the keys to bind and to loose; and now the multitudes, like them, would hinder these men. In the disciples, and the multitude, sin works. In the two blind men, the truth works. Then, what is all the teaching of Christ, if it be not obeyed—be not made effective in us? The disciples have heard his words, and seen his marvellous works, but have not obeyed. But these blind men, conscious of their condition, call him Lord and Christ, and desire in themselves that which he came to do—to destroy the works of the devil, and to set them free. They cry for mercy—deliverance from sin. They cry for the common blessing; and when men would hinder them, they cry the more. No consideration for the opinions of professed followers deters them from obtaining that which only the Son of David can give.

32. Jesus stood still. They arrested the attention of the Son of David, the Lord. He cannot deny himself: he calls them to himself. What more can be desired? Are the right hand and the left prepared of the Father? Then Jesus, calling these two unto him, teaches us wherein is the preparation, and what it is that befits us for the place of first on the twelve thrones of glory. He asks them, *what he shall do unto them?* Their confession was the expression of an inward reality possessed; of which the sign is the evidence, corroborated by the subsequent words of Jesus. They ask not for light. No; this was the error of the two sons of Zebedee; but they asked that they might receive their sight; that the evil might be purged away. They desired the cross,

whereby their souls were restored, and then, receiving light, they would give it forth. And so Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes. The touch is the symbol of union—oneness with the Son of David. They were one with him who was crucified and rose on the third day (Rom. vii. 4); and so, their souls purged from all evil, *they followed him.*

CHAPTER XXI.

- 1 AND when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the Mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, saying unto them,
2 Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass
3 tied, and a colt with her : loose *them*, and bring *them* unto me. And if any
man say aught unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them ; and
4 straightway he will send them. (All this was done, that it might be
5 fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of
Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass,
and a colt the foal of an ass.)
- 6 And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, and brought
7 the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set *him* thereon.
8 And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way ; others cut
9 down branches from the trees, and strawed *them* in the way. And the mul-
titudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the
son of David ! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord ! Ho-
sanna in the highest !
- 10 AND when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying,
11 Who is this ? And the multitude said, This is Jesus, the prophet of Naza-
reth of Galilee.
- 12 AND Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold
and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers,
13 and the seats of them that sold doves ; and said unto them, It is written,
My house shall be called the house of prayer ; but ye have made it a den
14 of thieves. And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple ; and
he healed them.
- 15 And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he
did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the son
16 of David ; they were sore displeased, and said unto him, Hearest thou what
these say ? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea ; have ye never read, Out of
17 the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise ? And he
left them, and went out of the city into Bethany ; and he lodged there.
- 18 Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered. And when
19 he saw a fig-tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but
leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for
20 ever. And presently the fig-tree withered away. And when the disciples saw

21 *it*, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig-tree withered away! Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this *which is done* to the fig-tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the
22 sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

23 AND when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority
24 doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell
25 me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will
26 say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men;
27 we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

28 But what think ye? A *certain* man had two sons; and he came to the first,
29 and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I
30 will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second,
31 and said likewise. And he answered and said, I *go*, sir: and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of *his* father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans
32 and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen *it*, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

33 Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country:
34 and when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husband-
35 men, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his
36 servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent
37 other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last
38 of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is
39 the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they
40 caught him, and cast *him* out of the vineyard, and slew *him*. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?

41 They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out *his* vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner:
43 this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I

unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a
44 nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this
stone shall be broken : but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to
powder.

45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they
46 perceived that he spake of them. But when they sought to lay hands on
him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.

1. FOLLOWING our Evangelist, and endeavouring to bring out the truth without regard to any, even the most honoured in the history of the world, we cannot speak too plainly, and, in so doing, condemn too strongly the absurd remarks made by those who hold to the letter of Scripture, and who put their explanation of it forth as the spiritual meaning of a passage. Keeping in mind what has gone before, the accumulation of truths here renders the picture now before us still more instructive. The depravity of the heart and the deceitfulness of sin are brought out side by side with the long-suffering mercy and goodness of God ; who, as he unfolds his covenant, makes the wrath of man to praise him, while the remainder of wrath he restrains.

Matthew employs every circumstance that would give expression to the invisible spiritual things by which the Lord Jesus was surrounded. The kingdom of God does not destroy man's individuality and responsibility, but sets him free from all that enslaves him. It breaks every yoke. But here are men, "with one consent"—disciples ready to betray, the hierarchy seeking to put him to death, and the Gentiles ready to crucify him—all, despite his work, with one consent, serve the kingdom of darkness.

They are nigh to Jerusalem, so nigh as on the Mount of Olives, whence he ascended into the heavenly Jerusalem. He comes to Bethphage—the house of unripe figs. Matthew records, in the parable of the Sower, a class of hearers who still retain the old roots, and so do not bring any fruit to perfection (chap xiii. 7 and 22). These not being uprooted, the Word is choked. Such, indeed, are his disciples, especially the two who now represent those who profess a great deal, but have no perfect fruit.

Jesus sends two to the village over against them. Which are they? Surely here is an instance where the separation into chapters—if they were to guide us—would be of incalculable

mischievous. We do not hesitate in saying, that those sent were the two sons of Zebedee; for they have yet to learn the truth Jesus desired to impart, and which the Spirit afterwards taught them, as he brought to their remembrance the things concerning Jesus.

They were to go into the village over against them, where they would find an ass tied—a wild ass. The tame ass knoweth his master's crib (Is. i. 2, 3), and requires no outward restraint, but Israel do; for they not only know not him who is their Father, who has brought them up as children, but they rebel against him. The ass is tied as if but recently caught, and its colt is with it. Jesus says, Loose them, and bring them unto me. So he commands in the parable (chap. xviii. 27), even as when "he stood still"—even as he now waits—to see if his disciples knew how, despite the multitude, to bind and to loose the blind men on the way. Then, as condemning the multitude that would restrain the blind men, and, further, teaching his disciples, as babes requiring milk, he says, If any man shall say aught unto you, say, The Lord hath need of them. So he had need of those two blind men, in order to teach the vast multitude, and his two disciples, in particular; for he shows the contrast between the faith of the two blind men and the unbelief of the rest, expressed in its highest type by the two sons of Zebedee. "Then straightway the man will send them." He will not, he cannot keep them bound.

The Lord has need of the two asses, and the disciples must now learn from the wild asses, even as Balaam did from his faithful ass, since they obey not the Word of God. How often have we all thus to learn! As wild, they live by themselves—*they are separate*. (Hos. viii. 9.) The Psalmist distinguishes them from all beasts. (Ps. civ. 11.) They are created for a burden, according to their name, ἰποζυγίων, but they stubbornly resist. Such, indeed, is man, who, with the greatest privileges and advantages, will not take the yoke of Christ and bear his burden, even the will of the Father—the law of his Sonship, for his yoke is easy, and his burden is light. But these, wild by nature, bound by another, are loosed by the Word of the Lord—their untamed nature is brought into subjection by the power of the Son of David, and their burden is the Son of God going up into Jerusalem.

4. All this was done that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophet. We must avoid the error of taking these words literally. Jesus did not obey predictions, but predictions were the expression of the reality, which throws its shadows in all directions, without regard to time. The eternal truths of the kingdom know no time. The fulfilment of a prediction is the manifestation of the reality. Then, as the Son of God, he is meek; or, as the prophet says, He is righteous, having salvation (Zech. ix. 9); or, as another says, He has the garments of salvation, and the robe of righteousness (Is. lxi. 10), with which he, as a bridegroom, clothes his bride, who is the *daughter of Jerusalem*. When thus his disciples learn of him, and so, through the Son of David, put away their unsubdued nature—the enmity of the carnal mind, they are no longer *separate*, but, as the *touch* of the blind eyes signified, they are one with him, and so are prepared to go up with him into Jerusalem, and share with him there the throne of his glory. They take his yoke, and find it easy; they bear his burden, and find it light. But these things the disciples did not yet understand. (John xii. 16.)

Mark, having particular regard to Peter, would speak only of one ass; but Matthew, having regard not only to Peter, but also to the two sons of Zebedee, would mention two. The disciples, having done as they were commanded, now put their garments on the asses, and set Jesus on them. He suffers them, that they and others may learn how the Word of God is trifled with; for men do not adhere to the simple commandment. As here, they interpose their own garments. When Jehu was proclaimed king, every man put his garment under him. (2 Kings ix. 13.) He cast it from him, a sign of putting off the old garment of the flesh, whereby alone we honour our King. So when men fast they rend their garments, signifying the same thing. But we are to rend our hearts, and not our garments, for Jehovah dwells with him who is of an humble and contrite heart. But the disciples, not understanding the glorious things the Lord was then revealing—not seeing the truth of God, gave expression to the condition of their own hearts, as the way in which they would follow him to the right hand and the left in the kingdom; even in their old Adam nature—the flesh uncrucified; more, they would bring down to their own level the truth. The woman

with the issue (chap. ix. 21), the true picture of the flesh, would cast away her filthy rags, and touch the garment of Jesus; but these men put their garments on the two asses, and place Jesus on them. What a striking illustration of man's religion. He would have the Son of God without the Christ. He would substitute for the garments of salvation his own filthy rags. How deceptive is the form in which it comes; no words could expose it as the picture before us; for we see with what plausibility, and with what subtlety, the flesh creeps in as the garments, as the old garments are put *between Jesus and the asses*. Perceiving the spiritual truth, according to the words of our Evangelist, we need not trouble ourselves how the asses were ridden.

8. But the multitude are represented as embracing the truth. In the presence of their King, they cast down their garments to the ground, as blind Bartimæus did, or as the cloud of witnesses, who laid aside every weight and sin, which doth so easily beset us (Heb. xii. 1): and then they cut down branches, and strewed them in the way, signifying, according to the law (Lev. xxiii. 40), how that they had renounced the old tabernacle of the flesh, and now, as strangers upon the earth, looked forward to their tabernacle eternal in the heavens (2 Cor. v. 2, 4), as they testified in their hosannas to him who came in the name of Christ the Lord, even as the two blind men testified, and as Peter afterwards taught the men of Jerusalem. (Acts ii. 36.)

10. In this glorious scene truth crowds in upon us; but, that we should not lose sight of the cross, the Evangelist brings us, in the midst of these stirring details, to another prophecy, with its attendant predictions, which is unconsciously referred to, by the whole city asking, Who is this? It is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth. But it is he that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah; this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength (Is. lxiii. 1, &c.), and who answers, I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.

12. The Lord has been betrayed, delivered to the Gentiles, and by them scourged and crucified; he has given his life a ransom for many—put away all that is in the world—all that is not of the Father—and entered into glory; and now, as Melchizedek, he reigns, and will reign, until he puts all enemies under

his feet, and the last enemy is death. And now, in the day of his power, his people are willing—only in the beauty *of holiness*. Therefore he cleanses the temple.

Then let us have a clear and distinct idea of the temple, and its relation to Jerusalem. Jerusalem is the city of God: it is Mount Zion, filled with his glory. It is at unity with itself; its palaces, a sure refuge. It is a city where God is all and in all. Such is the Jerusalem which is above, *the mother* of us all. The temple is the place where Jehovah dwelleth: it is his habitation. His people are this temple. (Eph. ii. 21, 22.) So truly are they one with him, and he with them, that he is the temple. (Rev. xxi. 22.) It is he in us that constitutes us the temple; as Paul says, Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17; vi. 19.) Jesus, then, enters this *spiritual* temple. In truth, he is the temple; for, as Christ, our paschal lamb, he is the cleansed, the purged vessel, purged by fire; and, as the Son, he fills this vessel with the fulness of Deity. We are members of his body, so are pure as he is pure—to express our oneness with him, he is the head, and we the body—and so we desire, according to the law of Christ, to be filled with all the fulness of God. Imagery is multiplied only to intensify the true idea. He now, as Melchizedek, rules in the midst of his enemies. He is cleansing the temple. All men, by reason of the truth, are of it; but he is cleansing it, that it may be holy, and without blemish. He is now sanctifying it—cleansing it with the washing of water by the Word—that he may present it to himself a glorious Church, without spot, wrinkle, or any such thing. Such is the bride of Christ, the Son of God: he is now preparing it. (Eph. v. 26, 27.)

If, then, we have at all apprehended the condition of Christ the Son of God, we have the one standard of the true Church. The great error of men is in overlooking the truth, that since the Restorer of all things is come, *all are of the Church of God*, and so must obey the truth in Christ Jesus: but, instead, they seek to bring men after their own ways, instead of the Church itself unfolding itself. Hence they start not from the truth, as it is in Christ Jesus, but bring into the Church of God that only which must be cast out. It will be, then, quite consistent, since he is cleansing the temple—for heaven is his thronè, and the earth his footstool,

as one vast temple, so representing his relation to all men—to find here the representatives of all *who are not* of the true temple. In the parable of the sower, there are four classes of hearers—as four, representing all men—of whom but one class presents the good ground; the others are rejected. Here we find the three rejected classes. There were those who bought and sold in the temple: it is the world at large, and particularly those who, with all worldly prudence, would *secularise* the invisible Church of God. Of these worldlings, there are the money-changers. They may call themselves the Church; but the temple must be cleansed. These are identified with the ransom money; they trade in it: such are trusting to godliness, without the power of it—an outward religion. It may take the form of a voluntary humility, or carnal asceticism, yet it is in no honour, but to the filling up of the flesh. What are our religious tendencies, but only outward in the flesh? The third class sell doves; and since Matthew has already associated the Holy Ghost with the form of a dove, this class leads the mind to those who would embrace the blessing of eternal life, having left all, *but not as Christ taught*. This class finds its representatives in the disciples. How many talk of the Spirit of God, and how that “it is all of grace,” and take the disciples for their pattern, as *having given up much* for the sake of the Lord; but it must be obvious, that so long as the old garment of the flesh is allowed to creep in between a crucified and subdued nature in Christ, and the Spirit of the Son, it is most odious in the sight of God, as it is the most deceptive. We follow not the teachings of men, but the teaching of the Word of God. These three classes, as with one consent, defile the temple, and Christ casts them out; he overthrows their tables and seats, saying, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of robbers. We may build glorious fanes for the service of Almighty God, adorn them, and set up in them the most ornate worship, as the offering of a reverential spirit; or we may adopt the very opposite, and condemn the others: yet, so long as either is attaching any importance to such, and by which they too often scandalize each other, they have abundant evidence that they are losing sight of the invisible temple—Christ the Son of God, who is *not divided*. The true temple of God is a house of prayer; for a man ought

always to pray, and not to faint; for so long as he is conscious of evil, he well knows how that, as he seeks to live Christ crucified, that adversary is ever reviving and troubling him. (Ps. cxxxviii. 1, &c.) But these classes, manifestly ignorant of this indispensable condition, have, with all their profession, made the temple of God only a den of robbers. Then, is not God's judgment now impending as much over us as over those the Lord addressed, as over those in the time of the prophet Jeremiah, and the fathers before them? Men are blinded by the god of this world, notwithstanding a social progress; they are not purged from the evil; and the words of Jehovah, as he contemplates *his* temple, are, Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it. He says, I will cast you *out of my sight*, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim (Jer. vii. 11, 15), when he removed his sanctuary from them, as he did also at Shiloh, and gave them up to their enemy to an everlasting bondage. Men may say, because of the force of circumstances, we are delivered to do these things; but it will be of no avail: Satan, the prince of this world, who works in the children of disobedience, is not only a murderer and a liar, but also a robber. He has not only taken possession of the heart of man, and deprived him of every blessing, but he would seize upon the inheritance, and defile the glory of the Eternal One.

14. But who are the fourth class who present the good ground for the spiritual life? Such are not cast out, but are received by Jesus. They know their need of cleansing, and come to him as the Son of David, that he may remove the evil. The blind and the lame come to him. They would have a clean heart, and a right spirit renewed within them, such as David himself prayed for; for, except they be born from above—that is, of water and the Spirit—become true temples, washed by Christ, the Son of David, and then possess the Spirit of God, *they cannot see, they cannot enter* the kingdom. They come to him then in the temple. So must we go to him, conscious of our true condition, that we may be living stones on the one living stone—possess Christ crucified, so washed, so cleansed, and we are so as we obey the Word, that we may be partakers of the glory of the Son of God. And they were healed. *They left all, and followed him.*

We must not suppose that the Gospel, by one or all of the writers, contains the whole of the Lord's teaching. As a true minister, full of compassion for the souls of men, he would never cease to testify to the covenant of God, as distinct from the teachings and practices of men—who, when they heard his words, and saw his works, in cleansing the material and spiritual temple, attested by signs unmistakeable, and heard the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David, were sore displeased. How powerfully soever he was setting forth truth; how irresistible soever were his arguments, these men, strong in prejudice, closed their ears and their eyes, that they might not hear, might not see. And they say, Hearest thou what they say? He could read their hearts. He knew their unrelenting enmity, yet he brings them to the Word, to the oracles of God, and shows how they are fulfilled, as he replies, saying, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise? This is neither a paraphrase, nor a translation of the original, which is, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. Satan is the enemy who would take us captive. The angel is the avenger against all who serve him. The strength that sets us free from both is the mighty redeeming arm of the Son of David. Then, where this strength is, there also will be the Spirit of the Son of the living God. It is the marriage union to which these babes witness, oneness with him who rose the third day, and ascended to his throne of glory—to all which praise is the witness, as in the first verse of this Psalm, it goes forth; O Jehovah, our Adoni, in other words, Christ, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! These babes perfected praise. Thus, they not only witnessed to the truth to which the healing of the blind and lame by the Son of David witnessed; but in *perfecting* praise, they attested how all such are of the true temple, for we are built up a spiritual house to show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of *darkness* into his marvellous light. (1 Pet. ii. 5, 9.) Matthew then preferred taking as the words of Jesus, the LXX., rather than the Hebrew, as the former “perfecting praise,” would express a condition the correlative of a true humility, *in the strength* of Je-

hovah (ch. xviii. 4). Thus these little ones attested the reward as John writes Rev. xix. 5—9.

17. He has taught the things of his kingdom—which fills heaven and earth. He has fully revealed his covenant, and taught them what is, and how to be, a living temple, yea, a living stone on the living foundation-stone of the spiritual house of God ; and now he sends these murmurers back to the Word of God, and leaves them. He leaves them for a little while, that they may obey the truth. They have the darkness and the light, the night and the day, which are continual witnesses to the covenant made with all flesh. He thus calls them to a better mind by his Word and Providence. So he deals with us all. While he cleanses the temple, he waits in long-suffering mercy to see if men will embrace his salvation ; if not, then his judgment sets in to their everlasting shame and confusion.

18. Now, in the morning, as he, the Son of David, returned into the city—even Jerusalem, which he had redeemed with judgment—he hungered. He is ever returning to us so long as we are here, and with one desire—even that we should work in his vineyard, and have the reward, leave all and follow him—yield the fruits of judgment, and of righteousness.

19. And when he saw a fig-tree in the way, &c. This miracle affords a remarkable instance how that the connexion in the mind of the writer is not perceived. Hence a casting about in all directions for a satisfactory interpretation of it, which after all is not obtained. We must condemn the practice of taking the miracles and parables of the Gospel out of their place, without regard to the context *even of each separate writer*. Such a practice is fraught with the greatest mischief, since simple minds are misled. To take the ground of the Evangelist is to take one very different from that which they take who try to explain the letter. By the former we enter into invisible realities, but by the latter we are limited to visible shadows.

The miracle or sign now before us gathers up all that goes before. And not only does it imply what goes before, but gives some very important accessory truth.

It is said that Mark shows himself a more accurate observer than Matthew. We repeat what we shall elsewhere show in respect to the cleansing of the temple, that there is nothing about

which the writers of the Gospel are so indifferent as the exact time and order of its events. And there is in the writings of Matthew that which shows him to be a consummate master of his matter, as he, with the utmost ease, plays his variations, in order distinctly and clearly to set forth the spiritual truth. Of what he narrates he was the eye-witness. Mark would depend greatly upon another—Peter.

He came to the fig-tree, and found nothing thereon but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig-tree withered away. The fig-tree teaches the necessity of *perfect* fruit; secondly, that that fruit springs from the invisible root; and thirdly, that it must be continual. Let us fail in any one of these conditions, and we admit robbers into the house of God—we make the house itself, which should be a temple, only a cave of robbers. The tree represents the Jewish nation, or the world, *or any individual*. It represents the twelve, or any one of them in particular. The vineyard of the Lord of Hosts—since the middle wall of partition is broken down, and all men are redeemed—is the world, and all are called into it to work, to dig, to know Christ crucified, that they may receive the full reward in the Son. One fig-tree in this world is, then, any individual in particular; and among the twelve it applies to none more than to the first and chief who says, *If judgment first begins at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the Gospel of God?* (1 Pet. iv. 17, 18.)

The earnest desire of the Father, expressed by the keen hunger of Jesus, is that all may yield fruit—perfect fruit. If we have the reward, we follow Jesus, and partake of his glory, and we praise him for ever. Our God is our praise, and we shall praise him, both small and great. (Deut. x. 21: Rev. xix. 5.) Of this, we now have the earnest in the Spirit. The fruit this tree must yield is the fruit *of the plant of his right hand planting*—that is, planted in the likeness of the death of Christ—then shall we be in the likeness of his resurrection, of which the Spirit is the witness: so, the fruit of judgment and of righteousness—of which the former is the more important, for without it we cannot have the latter.

Now this fruit must be from within, it must spring from the root. The sap of every tree rises from the root, and empties

itself into fruit. Jesus seeks good fruit—that which is according to God. The tree and the temple—the former on account of fruit, the latter on account of the condition necessary to this fruit—are often associated. Thus, ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building (1 Cor. iii. 9): grounded and settled in the faith (Col. i. 23)—that is, rooted and built up in Christ Jesus the Lord (Col. ii. 7). So, then, when we have the faith of Christ, we are said to be in him, rooted and grounded, that love may empty itself into fruits of righteousness, to the perfect praise and glory of God. If, then, this root be not there, if we be not rooted in Christ, and walking in him in love—in the law of the Spirit—another and corrupt root is there, and we defile the temple of God.

We now come to the consideration of that part of the miracle—the cursing of the fig-tree—which many objectors seize with a view to disparage the character of the Lord Jesus. The other miracle, which is often adduced with the same object, is closely allied to this. In that uncleanness is destruction from which Jesus is come to deliver. But here is the condition and end of him who, despite this deliverance, willingly makes the temple of God a cave of robbers. The Lord's cursing the tree is simply a declaration according to the condition of it; for what is not of faith is sin, which is cursed.

One of the difficulties alleged is, “that our Lord knowing, as by his divine power he must, that there were no figs upon that tree, should yet have gone to seek them there, should have made to his disciples as though he had expected to find them.” The same difficulty would present itself in all the perfect providence of God. He knows what is in our hearts; yet he tries us and proves us to know what is in our hearts—that is, to develop what is latent within—and see in whose ways we willingly walk.

Jesus hungered. He, the Son of David, had redeemed all men—whom the twelve represent, and who said, we have left all and followed thee. Does he not, then, desire to see of the travail of his soul, and to be satisfied? Has he died? Has he risen again? Having by his death commended to us the love of the Father, would he, then, that any one should perish? But if man will defile the sanctuary of the Most High, sully the glory of the Eternal One, he must cleanse his temple of such. Still his desire

is that there should be fruit. He came, then, expecting fruit. Is his grace powerless? Is his arm shortened that he cannot save? For what, then, should the Eternal One come to his creature, but that for which he has created him, redeemed him. He desires, he expects the fruit of judgment, of judgment with mercy—the condemnation of sin, and freedom of the sinner. Every man's life should manifest this, for he is redeemed. Jerusalem was full of judgment, but now, murderers. The temple was the dwelling-place of righteousness, but now it is a cave of robbers. Is it, then, the *will of the Son of David* that it should be so—of him who hungers, and comes seeking for fruit?

More, he knew the condition of the tree, that it had but leaves only, and he would have his disciples know this, for they professed to have left all and followed him. He showed them by it their awful condition, not only with respect to their end, but also as defiling the temple of God. Men desire not, and therefore seek not, the cleansing of the temple, because they know not the truth the Lord is here revealing. As *one* fig-tree with leaves, yet without fruit, it represents the old Adam nature, which, although it may cover its nakedness and shame with leaves, cannot bear fruit. Whatever be its outward appearance, whatever be its profession, whether it enrobes itself in a sanctimonious demeanour, or says, "We have left all and followed thee," it has no fruit.

"Let no fruit grow upon thee for ever," has no limitation, as if the parabolic teaching here had reference only to the Jew. From the nature of things it cannot have, for all men have come short of the glory of God. The condemnation of the old Adam nature must come. Christ, the Son of David, came not to make it better, but to cast it out. If it be not now condemned *in Christ*—in judgment with mercy, whereby we yield the fruits of judgment—we shall hereafter be condemned with sin in judgment *without mercy*, and, being found to be only as dross, be castaways.

In these words, the Lord Jesus at once deals a mortal blow at all the different schemes and systems of religion, at all the various creeds of men throughout all time. The old Adam nature, as a fig-tree with leaves only, according to Satan's temptation, to be in the covenant, knowing good and evil, however it may hide its own genealogy with a semblance of a truer life, will never bear fruit; for that which is of the flesh is flesh. And the Lord here shows,

in these words, that however the old nature may have had imposed on it the beggarly elements, whereby man was in bondage—for so long as a man lives, the law hath dominion over him (Rom. vii. 1); or, however it may now be required of the old Adam “to believe and be saved,” yet the Lord testifies that it can never be, it can never bear fruit; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved, but the name Christ Jesus. Jesus desired fruit because he desired faith. So, in Christ, the old Adam is put off; and then, being in Christ, if we do not go on to perfection in the Son, we are nigh unto cursing. (Heb. vi. 1—8.)

Well might the disciples marvel at what they saw. Well may those who read this narrative exclaim, “Who, then, can be saved?” But the gracious reply is still “With *man* it is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

21. Wherefore Jesus says, “Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this to the fig-tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.” In other words, “Do what the *mighty hand* of Jehovah alone can do.” How can the old Adam nature bear fruit? If we do not now in Christ condemn sin in the flesh—and we do not, if we do not live Christ crucified—we shall be condemned with it hereafter to our everlasting shame and confusion. It remains that as the tree such were the disciples, though outwardly they had left all and *changed the manner of their life*—such is the condition of all who make the temple of God a cave of robbers, such of all who do not perfect praise. But if Christ be in us, and we walk in him, rooted and grounded in love, our life is one of prayer and praise. The disciples have the keys, but know not how to use them; they cannot yet *see clearly* how to take the mote out of a brother’s eye, for there is the evil spirit manifesting himself in contention and strife, one against the other.

The Lord’s words show how little they understood him, and the things he was revealing. He says, Verily I say unto you, “If ye have faith, and doubt not,” &c. Then they would not say, “Who can be saved?” Nor, “These nations are greater than I, how can I dispossess them?” Then, what is this faith?—no word is more hackneyed than it. It is the faith of Christ, the faith of

the Son of God,—not a belief in a fiction of merits, nor does it consist in a persuasion of mind of the truth of certain historical facts which the old Adam can readily give, but the substance itself as revealed, possessed, incorporated, and demonstrated—as the root empties itself into fruit—to the praise and glory of God ; when what is seen *is not* of things that do appear. (Heb. xi. 1, 3.) This faith, in its first beginnings, is Christ in us ; then we have eternal life in the Son of God. (1 John v. 11.) In Christ we overcome all that is not of the Father, and here there can be no room for doubt or unbelief.

But what is affirmed of this faith? Doubtless the difficulty to many reading the narrative is that which beset the disciples. Doubt is unbelief, and reasons not from Christ, not from the spiritual kingdom of God, for it cannot ; but from that which is outward—from the creature—the old Adam nature possessed by the devil. Did they but in faith in Christ Jesus interpret his act, all would have been simple and easy enough, but they interpreted it from their own point of view, and so out of him. If they have faith, the fruitless tree *must* wither. It cannot, it will not bear fruit. But if they do yield the fruits of faith, it is not the tree, as it is the root grounded in Christ that yields the fruit. Not only, then, will the tree, so to speak, wither, but the mountain itself, in which the fruitless tree is rooted—for it is rooted in Satan—be cast into the sea. What a solemn truth, then, is thus distinctly and prominently before us. The fig-tree that bears fruit whenever it may please the Holy One of Israel to seek it, is rooted in Christ ; else, it is a fruitless tree rooted in Satan.

Where there is faith, then, in Christ the Son of David, there the temple is cleansed, and then it becomes a house of prayer. Wherefore he says—and he would remind them of the indispensable condition of faith—*All things whatsoever* ye shall ask in prayer, *believing*, ye shall receive. If the fig-tree is withered, and the mountain is cast into the sea—in other words, if ye are crucified to the world, the flesh, and sin, ye will ask nothing in respect of them, for to do so is not to be crucified to all, but ye will pray in the Spirit, in a cleansed and holy temple, and it will be for those things only which are according to the covenant of God ; else, “We ask amiss, and have not.”

23. On his way to the city the fig-tree is withered, and now he

comes into the temple—two significant acts, for *when* the fig-tree withers the temple ceases to be a cave of robbers, and is glorious with the presence of the Only Begotten of the Father. And he taught in the temple. We never read of Jesus entering the holy place ; his ministrations were always in the *ἱερός*, or court. What, then, would he, in the midst of these very stirring events, teach the hierarchy and the people ? Would it not be his own death and entrance into Jerusalem ? for he did tell his murderers that he would rise again on the third day. Would it not be the cleansing of the temple, and the solemn truth—so fitting to their condition—taught by the withering of the fig-tree ? While he was teaching, they interrupt him. His words, confirmed by his works, were unanswerable. They are astonished by his works ; they feel the power of his words, which, like a two-edged sword, pierced to the discerning of their thoughts ; but since they will not obey, they are overcome and blinded. But they do not raise one word in objection to his going for fruit when there was none, and cursing the tree because it had none. No : they ask him, saying, By what authority doest thou these things ? and who gave thee this authority ?

24. He read their hearts, and he would make them know that he knew them, that they might see and enter the kingdom ; else, they should read them to their own shame and confusion. He has redeemed them, he desires fruit, and he makes them feel that he is aware that there is none. Not only are they one with those who defile the temple, and so cannot bear fruit, but they feel the truth of his words, yet prejudice blinds them. However, in truest love, he answers his enemies ; he places them on a ground they all have recognised, for all accounted John to be a prophet.

The baptism of John was *the outward sign of the truth* to which the Baptist prominently testified. He possessed it, he lived it, and his outward life was according to the sign of it—the truth by which the fig-tree is withered, the blind see, the temple is cleansed, every one ascends the hill of the Lord, by which the Son of David himself enters Jerusalem, that, as the Son of God, he may sit on the throne of his glory. Here we see distinctly the one truth the Lord is ever enforcing—the one truth that stands in the forefront of all his teaching ; that one, which not only the worldling, but also the bigoted follower of outward

things, and the impulsive enthusiast who has left all and followed Jesus, fail to understand. They understood not that the Baptist, in all that distinguished him, testified to a death to all that was of man and the glory of man—to a death, even that of Christ. He preached the kingdom of the heavens at hand. He witnessed to the power of Melchizedek, which puts all enemies under his feet, whereby he was a holy temple from his mother's womb. He renounced the flesh, as he testified all flesh was grass, and all the goodness thereof as the flower of the field; the grass withereth, *ἐξηρανθή* (Is. xl. 8; and Matt. xxi. 19), the flower fadeth, and so he called upon all to go up into the high mountain, even the mount of glory, and behold their God. Thus, in referring to the baptism of John, he gathers up all that goes before—all that he had taught in the temple. He sends them to the Scriptures that they might understand the kingdom of God. In mercy and in love, as their King, he places them on a ground whereon they can answer and testify if they will. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? So he takes them to the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. (Mark i. 1.) He sends them to the Scriptures that they might know them and the power of God, and not err therein, and so understand by what authority he doeth these things.

We have the Scriptures—the revelation of what is, which, with one unerring voice, call all men to obey, to repent, to turn from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God. But, instead of obeying the Word, the enmity of the heart manifests itself in all its strength; instead of understanding the covenant of God, the necessity of cleansing the temple, the impossibility of the old Adam to bear fruit, this old and corrupt nature conspires in all its bitter malignity against the Holy One of God. Whatever be the mode of expression, it is simply enmity. Jesus had slain this enmity, destroyed sin, abolished death, but men prefer its bondage to the glorious liberty of the children of God. And thus, after reasoning among themselves, they answer, We cannot tell. Men read the Scriptures, but they do not understand them. And why? Because they do not embrace Christ, whom they reveal. Men are not true to themselves. But Jesus, who knew what was in man, answers them, as he now answers all such, saying, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

They resisted the Word of God. They resisted when nature obeyed it; for, when the Lord of nature requires fruit, a fruitless fig-tree is an anomaly; and such cannot remain where the Christ is, or where he who works in him is. Uncrucified in heart and ears, the old Adam resists the Holy Ghost. Hence men are left to fill up the measure of their iniquity, to all the power of the enemy, to work evil with all greediness. And how important is it that the trumpet give no uncertain sound, else who can prepare himself *for the battle*.

28. However, in mercy he does not leave them. What think ye? Have ye read the Scriptures? Have ye considered them? What think ye? Men do not think, do not consider. He now directs their minds. A certain man had two sons. These are not the same two great divisions as under the one Father and two sons in Luke xv. 11, where they are holy angels and fallen men, but the children of the first Adam, and the children of the last—the Esaus and the Jacobs of this world—the former desire the mess of pottage, they live in the flesh; the latter, having parted with the flesh, the old Adam nature, desire the blessing: and so, in these two, despite the restoration of all, we see the working of Satan, the fallen one; and the working of the Spirit of the Son of God, the blessing of the Father. He says, Go work in my vineyard—which, as we have already seen is the covenant—Christ the Son of God. To work in the Christ is to receive the reward, the glory of the Son. This working is a continual winning of Christ, and so, being found in him, we have the righteousness of God. From the nature of things the old Adam cannot work in this vineyard, but must wither, and then the last Adam is a quickening Spirit; so, when the flesh is put off, the soul, being free, in the blessing of the Father, rises in newness of life.

The vineyard is one: to it Jesus referred when he answered Peter; and now, as the parable is here also addressed to all, and the hierarchy in particular, it condemns not only that spirit of Protestantism which is ever anathematizing the Church of Rome, or whining because of perversions to her faith—a Protestantism that is selfish, narrow, exclusive, that knows only a judgment without mercy, and so is identical with Romanism—but also Romanism itself, which is here represented by the religionists of

his day. Christianity condemns both. He comes to the first of the two sons, and says, "Go work in my vineyard." He answers, "I will not;" but afterwards went. He comes to the other, and says likewise, and he answers, "I go, sir;" but went not. Wherefore Jesus says, the publicans and harlots—they who are deeply conscious of the true condition of the old Adam nature; who see it in all its naked deformity, without the leaves to hide its shame—obey the call, Come and work in the vineyard; so that Christ is effective in them, and the old and corrupt nature is put off, so then there is no amendment of it. The teaching of the Lord is very distinctive. These publicans and harlots are to him preferable to a righteousness of the law (as it is called), which is only a mending of the old Adam nature. He would ever prefer an outward manifestation of evil to that condition represented by the fig-tree *with leaves* only. (Rev. iii. 16: and Appendix (C).)

The disobedience here denounced is seen clearly in the first king of Israel. Saul was told that his disobedience was as the sin of witchcraft—the work of the devil. Then what was it? He told the prophet that he had fulfilled the command of Jehovah. He believed that he had. He believed that he had done more, and that this would be acceptable to him. But the prophet asks, What is this bleating of the sheep and this lowing of the oxen in mine ears? He had slain the refuse, and kept the best to sacrifice unto the Lord. Thus, man imagines that he is doing the will of God, obeying the truth to which the Baptist testified, when he puts away gross sins—the worst aspect of the old Adam nature—and retains the best, even a religious demeanour; but this deceptive garb *of sin* calls forth the unqualified denunciation of the prophet, who, with an unsparing hand, shows Saul how, if he be a true king, a man after God's own heart, he must slay every enemy, put off the old Adam himself altogether.

The Lord puts the question, "Whether of the twain did the will of his Father?" Their answer is their own condemnation. So will it be hereafter. Every one in the knowledge of the truth, if he be not righteous, will be self-condemned. The judgment of man is not that of God, for the refuse enter the kingdom before the best. They enter with the true King, the true Man after God's own heart; they put away all that is of the fruitless fig-tree; they have faith; they take not the old nature—they cannot—with

them into the kingdom of God; so they defile not the temple. What an humbling truth for the great ones, the mighty ones of the earth! the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you! The disciples needed this teaching of the Lord as much as the people, and the hierarchy. And the Lord adds, "John came unto you in the way of righteousness," &c. We cannot agree with the following explanation of these words, however high be its authority, "He did not come seeking to put new wine into old bottles, but himself fulfilling that very idea of righteousness which you pretended to have set before yourselves, that which consisted in strong and marked separation of himself from sinners, and in an earnest asceticism."—*Archb. Trench*. He did not fulfil the idea of righteousness, but simply that of judgment—of judgment with mercy: and this, in no separation from sinners, but from sin; nor in any asceticism, however earnest, in depriving the old Adam nature of anything, which would be in truth only a preparing of the old bottles for the new wine, but in putting off the old Adam, the old bottles altogether. But ye believed him not, says the Lord. Ye embraced not the Christ to whom he witnessed, but the others did: so the old nature was put off, they believed him—they repented, they entered the kingdom. But you seeing—beholding in him the truth, did not afterwards repent in believing him.

The two sons of the one father are the Esaus and the Jacobs—the former are the old Adam nature, the latter the last Adam, a quickening Spirit. The former God hates; the latter he loves. The former has its root in Satan, and brings forth unto sin; the latter has its root in the Son of God, and brings forth fruit unto God. (Rom. vii. 4.)

33. A certain householder planted a vineyard. He is the Father; the vineyard is the covenant in Christ Jesus. He planted it when he revealed his covenant at the deluge, afterwards by the three patriarchs, or in bringing his Son up out of Egypt into the land of promise. The covenant was co-extensive with the Jewish nation as representing all men: and since, in the revelation of the covenant in Christ Jesus, the middle wall of partition is broken down, all nations are now the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts. This truth Peter did not know until he learned it through Cornelius. (Acts x. 34.) All men, then, are planted by God, planted

in the covenant, to bear the fruits of judgment and of righteousness, which the old Adam can never give: even as the withered fig-tree and as the Baptist taught. This vineyard is let out to husbandmen. The husbandmen and the trees *are one subject*—as in the case of the centurion and his servant, the woman with an issue and Jairus's daughter, the Syrophenician woman and her daughter. Every man, then, is a tree; every man is also a husbandman. Here is the prevenient grace of God, and man's responsibility. Every man is a tree, planted in the covenant, and the husbandman is to cultivate this tree with a view to fruit. If he neglects to do what is necessary, it becomes a degenerate plant of a strange vine, and brings forth wild grapes.

What is there that the covenant has not provided? The vineyard is planted in a very fruitful hill. It is a *holy hill*—the sunny mount of the Lord. It is fenced, a hedge is placed around it—even holiness—as a wall of fire. The stones are gathered out of it—the hard and rebellious ones, who are in continual antagonism to the covenant—the descendants of Ham, who dishonoured the paternity—the Canaanites are gathered out of it. In the revelation of these truths—the fencing and gathering out the stones—there is, *de factis*, the planting of the vine, as elsewhere, “Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt, thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it, and it filled the land.” (Ps. lxxx. 8, 9.) The whole of the people who occupied the land were unto him as this one vine, so was the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts. (Is. v. 7.) They were all planted in the covenant—in Christ the Son of God. It was the choicest vine. It was a noble vine, a righteous seed. Men understand not what the revelation of the covenant is—what every message from Jehovah imports. He digged a wine-press in it. Therein a power bruises the fruit, even as the flail does the corn; or as the womb—the house of bondage—is broken up, that life may come forth. So then, there is a humbling of oneself under the mighty hand of God, that we may partake of his glory. This humbling, this crushing of the old Adam in us, is the fruit of judgment, to which the wine-press witnesses. He also built a tower. He digs the wine-press, he builds the tower. The tower is for the watchman. Jehovah himself is a strong tower, a sure refuge; the *righteous* runneth into it, and are set aloft. So here are found the fruits of righteous-

ness when we possess the blessing of God, and in it watch against all enemies.

The householder has planted his vine in the full blessings of his covenant in holiness and in righteousness, and surrounded his vineyard with a wall of fire. The husbandmen, in cultivating the vine, are ever reminded by the wine-press and the tower of the nature and character of the fruit. The householder now departs into a far country. The covenant of God stands fast, and it is all-sufficient to him who obeys it. He takes care, and works according to it, so that when the householder sends for the fruits according to it, he receives them. His departing shows not only that the covenant is a reality, but that it is within the power of every man to work in the vineyard, with no uncertainty, but with sure success. No man has a right to be a fruitless fig-tree, but a choice noble vine, bearing the fruits of judgment and of righteousness. But what is to be said of this vineyard—the planting of the Father, who has done for it all that could be done? What is the Jewish nation? Yea, what are all men—the world—notwithstanding the full revelation of the truth? Who understands it? Who renders the fruit of judgment? Where is it? Instead of the vine—a choice vine—is it not rather the fig-tree, thicker and thicker, with leaves, of which it will hereafter be stripped, to its everlasting shame and confusion?

As the time of fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, especially to them who professed to know the covenant and their duty in respect of it. The servants, here, are not sent to pluck the fruit from the trees, as if the householder planted the trees, and they would yield fruit independently of their labour. No; the husbandmen must labour to preserve the quality of the fruit, and they will rejoice to give it *according to all* that has been done by the householder. How simple is the truth! We are left in perfect freedom to train the tree—that is, ourselves—according to its planting. In this planting, we have nothing to do with the old Adam nature; the stones are gathered out, a hedge of fire is around it, and it is rooted in a holy soil. And so it is only for the tree to give forth, according to the law of the covenant, its fruit: being watered, pruned, and watched over by the husbandman. If, then, such be the planting, and such the duty of the husbandman, and the tree and the husbandman be one and the

same individual, *he must do violence* to the very nature of things not to bear fruit. And is not this the language of Scripture of all who walk not with God, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of their life?

But when is the time of fruit? Surely all times. Whenever the householder shall send for it. His departing not only leaves us in perfect freedom, but implies that we are to watch and to work against all adverse power and influences. Then, as it was in the wilderness, and during the history of the Jewish nation, so is it throughout all time and with all men. "Thou shalt remember all the way which Jehovah thy Elohim led thee *these forty years* in the wilderness, to humble thee, and prove thee, to know what is in thine heart—whether thou would give forth the fruit of judgment and of righteousness in keeping his statutes. As a Father he chastened thee, that in all the trials and temptations of life thou mightest keep his commandments, walk in his way, and fear him. (Deut. viii. 1, 20.)

The time of fruit drawing nigh is known and felt by the presence of the enemy. If, then, we are on the watch-tower of our faith, and can press the grapes—that is, put off the old man—we show and yield the fruit of judgment. In the watch-tower of our faith we pray, and the servants of the householder come, and so they receive the fruit, and it is borne up as a memorial before God.

But it may be that we fail to keep the watch-tower of our faith: we are overcome, and so cannot give the fruit of judgment. And here is no excuse, for what becomes of the householder's planting? What of all our toil and labour? But, then, in mercy, one and another messenger is sent. If, then, we repent, we yield the fruit of judgment, for the enemy is cast out, and all is restored; but if we do not repent, do not turn from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God, we do violence, we beat one, we kill another, and we stone a third. Thus the old Adam nature resists the truth, destroys those who would bind it, and set the soul free. Every servant who comes, comes that he may receive the fruit of judgment; if not, the mighty power of evil reveals itself, which the Almighty arm of Jehovah alone can overthrow. This fruit is so precious to the householder, that he sends more servants than before to the same end, but with like result. But now he sends his only Son for the same fruit, to cast

down all that is not of the Father. But he receives it not ; and, commensurate with the mercy and love of the householder, do these husbandmen harden and rebel. They would kill the Son, and seize upon the inheritance. They cast out the covenant ; they cast out judgment and righteousness ; and so, in all the power of unrighteousness, they seize upon the divine nature, and would make it as themselves, even as Peter would have the reward with an evil eye. Thus the vineyard which was planted full of judgment is full of murderers, and righteousness can no longer dwell there : it is cast out and destroyed. And thus men who are confederate with evil, are allowed to see the heinousness of sin, that they may forsake it, for Jehovah will be its destruction. (Hosea xiii. 9—14.)

The Lord of the vineyard sends his Son, and expects that the husbandmen will reverence him—reverence him as Lord, even as the wife does the husband. He comes revealing the love of the Father, that all they, united in the bonds of the everlasting covenant (Rom. vii. 4), may inherit the throne of his glory. He comes, then, for fruit ; he comes for the indispensable qualification, else they will not reverence him. In the revelation of his covenant, he cannot expect that they will despise the honour and the glory, and continue enslaved to sin, but execute judgment in the condemnation of sin, and then, in righteousness, reverence the Son. But, alas ! they do not ; they resist. They strengthen themselves against all that the mercy and love of the Father can do ; they cast out the Son, and by wicked hands slay him. Such is the unchanging character of the old Adam nature, notwithstanding its outward appearance to deceive man (verse 19).

But the Lord, the Spirit,—the earnest of the inheritance—is coming, despite their unrighteousness. The covenant must stand. The wickedness of man cannot destroy the truth. Then, when he comes, what shall he do unto those husbandmen ?

41. They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their season. They are self-condemned in their judgment of others. In this answer is seen the deceivableness of sin : it is loudest in condemning others, but it hates judgment with mercy, which would be its own condemnation. It may have its “retreats,” “revivals,” “missions,” with

zeal and earnestness, urging men to leave off sins ; it may move the feelings of the most sturdy, and withal be satisfied with its success—all which the reply of these faithless husbandmen includes, who do not put off the old Adam altogether without any amendment whatsoever.

42. Many a path that seems right to a man is most certainly the way of death. It is the fearful property of sin to hide its own character and tendency. Alas ! how many flatter themselves until their iniquity be laid bare. They bless themselves, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my *own heart*. But the Lord, pulling away the mask, says, Did ye not read in the Scriptures, the stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner ?

What was this stone ? and why did they reject it ? It is the corner stone—tried, elect, precious. In it the two truths of the covenant, which constitute the temple, meet. In the psalm referred to (cxviii.), praise goeth forth to Jehovah, because of his *mercy* and his *love* : that in his strength every enemy is overcome ; that he is our strength and our song, and is become our salvation ; that his *right hand* doeth valiantly ; and that the voice of rejoicing is also in the tabernacles of the *righteous*. And this is according to the stone which is become the head of the corner. It is refused by the builders ; for he was sorely chastened, and now enters the gates of righteousness—the gate of the Lord, into which the righteous enter. This chastening, and this rejoicing, are identical with judgment and with righteousness. As Jehovah Elohim says, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner, a sure foundation. . . . *Judgment* will I lay to the line, and *righteousness* to the plummet. So is it laid. (Is. xxviii. 16, 17.)

43. Jesus now turns their words against them. The kingdom of God is not theirs exclusively, but is for all men. So it can be taken from all as from them ; but their distinctive privileges, leading them to Christ, were an unmistakeable testimony to its presence. It consisted not in those outward things which distinguished the Jewish nation from other nations ; as Paul said, they were against them, contrary to them. The Jewish nation was called out to witness to the covenant, but they trampled it under foot ; but they who obey the call are the true

nation—a nation of kings and priests unto God—the true elect, who manifest the unchangeable principles of the covenant, and so bring forth the fruits of the vineyard. So, then, the Jew who was first will be last, and the last first.

When the Lord comes as the bridegroom for his bride—and he did so come when he poured forth of his Spirit upon all flesh, as he is yet to come in all his glory—he will give to her his glory, as she is now bringing forth fruit unto God (Rom. vii. 4), which is not the fruit of the fig-tree, for the old Adam is driven out. It is not in the covenant, and, therefore, cannot give the fruit of it.

44. However, the voice of mercy is again heard. Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. Here is an allusion to the manner in which Jewish criminals were stoned: “They were first made to fall from an elevation upon a large stone laid there for the purpose. If the criminal was not killed by the fall, the stone was taken up and cast upon him.”—*Robinson*. Here the Lord says, he who falls on this stone *shall* be broken. It will be a true death to sin, and it will not then be cast upon him. But he who does not now so die to sin in Christ, so yield the fruit of judgment, then on him will this stone fall, and grind him to powder. It will be the second death, the most true, the most awful of all, in the everlasting banishment into outer darkness, where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

45. The Lord Jesus has clearly set before his hearers, not only sin in its dire enmity to the covenant of God, but also *the way* of righteousness; but, blinded by sin, they see not their true condition as it is naked before God. Like Adam of old they make aprons of fig-leaves instead of the robe taken from the slain victim. Then, instead of repenting and believing the truth, they manifest sin in all its evil working, they *seek* to lay hold of Jesus, but they *fear* the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.

CHAPTER XXII.

1 AND Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, The
2 kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for
3 his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the
4 wedding : and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants,
saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner:
my oxen and *my* fatlings *are* killed, and all things *are* ready : come unto
5 the marriage. But they made light of *it*, and went their ways, one to his
6 farm, another to his merchandize: and the remnant took his servants, and
7 entreated *them* spitefully, and slew *them*. But when the king heard
thereof, he was wroth : and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those
8 murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The
9 wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye
therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the mar-
10 riage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together
all as many as they found, both bad and good : and the wedding was fur-
11 nished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw
there a man which had not on a wedding garment : and he saith unto him,
12 Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And
13 he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and
foot, and take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness ; there shall be
14 weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few *are*
chosen.

15 Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him
16 in *his* talk. And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians,
saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in
truth, neither carest thou for any *man* : for thou regardest not the person
17 of men. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou ? Is it lawful to give tribute
18 unto Cæsar, or not ? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why
19 tempt ye me, *ye* hypocrites? Show me the tribute money. And they
20 brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose *is* this image
21 and superscription? They say unto him, Cæsar's. Then saith he unto
them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto
22 God the things that are God's. When they had heard *these words*, they
 marvelled, and left him, and went their way.

23 The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no
24 resurrection, and asked him, saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die,

having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto
25 his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren : and the first, when
he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his
26 brother : likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And
27 last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife
28 shall she be of the seven ? for they all had her.

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the Scrip-
30 tures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor
31 are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as touch-
ing the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken
32 unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac,
and the God of Jacob ? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

33 And when the multitude heard *this*, they were astonished at his doctrine.

34 But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to
35 silence, they were gathered together. Then one of them, *which was a*
36 lawyer, asked *him a question*, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is
37 the great commandment in the law ? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love
the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy
38 mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like
39 unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two com-
40 mandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

41 While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying,
42 What think ye of Christ ? Whose son is he ? They say unto him, *The son*
43 of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him
44 Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till
45 I make thine enemies thy footstool ? If David then call him Lord, how is
he his son ?

46 And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any *man* from
that day forth ask him any more *questions*.

1. How simple is the truth ! How simple is the wisdom of God ! Yet, alas ! by the various and opposing theories and dogmas of men and churches it is perverted.

The Lord Jesus continues his teaching by parables. In the last it was the Father planting his vineyard in a holy soil, surrounding it with a hedge of fire, digging a wine-press, and building a tower. All which find their *reality* in the Christ—in judgment with mercy. But failing to believe into Christ crucified, not only have they not the Spirit of the Son, but they turn the grace of God into lasciviousness (Jude, 4) ; or, as Jehovah Elohim of Hosts says, For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands ; and thou saidst, I will not transgress ; when upon

every hill and under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot. Yet I planted thee a noble vine, a perfect vine—in all my perfections—wholly a righteous seed: how then art thou a plant turned away, a strange vine unto me? (Jer. ii. 20, 21.)

We now come to this parable attesting the correlative truth. It is the King making a marriage for his Son. The Fatherhood implies all that the Kingship expresses. All which is in the chief corner stone, the foundation laid—Christ, the Son of the living God, the Son of the true David, the Son of the true Abraham: who enters Jerusalem, cleanses the temple, and fills it with his glory.

The Lord Jesus ever enforces distinctive truth; so here, he says, A certain king made a marriage for his son. The change of formula with which the Lord begins this parable is worthy of remark. He has just been speaking of the kingdom of God—the kingdom of the Father—which, like the Spirit of Christ, expresses two distinct and correlative truths. Now he begins with the covenant formula, “the kingdom of the *heavens*.” The marriage which the Father makes for the Son is in the Spirit, and implies all that is in Christ, the Son of David, who comes forth in the name and power of Jehovah, and in whom is the holy soil in which trees of righteousness, as *right hand plants*, take root. Then, where Christ is, there will be the Spirit of life.

In the preceding parable, the Father, despite the working of evil, and because of the revelation of his kingdom, says, They will reverence my Son. And now, he so sends forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding. It is sufficient to say these servants were the Baptist and the Lord Jesus, who was a minister of God unto the circumcision, who both preached the kingdom of the heavens at hand. But, in the revelation of the covenant, which is distinctly revealed by its foremost truth—redemption, a bringing up out of Egypt—there is a call to the marriage of the Son. So, then, the existence of the nation was a continual call. And, when the law was given at Sinai—given because of transgression, which law held the uncrucified nature in dominion, and so led men to Christ, in whom alone deliverance could be found, that that law might work within as an operating principle—there was a further, and that a continual call. The Jew rested in the law, and made his boast of God; but

he knew not Christ, and therefore could not, with all his boasting, know his God; and so, though bidden by his redemption to come to the marriage, he, resting in the law, refuses.

4. Again, he sent forth other servants—all those who went forth *in his name*: as Peter on the day of Pentecost, Stephen before the Sanhedrim, and Paul everywhere, attesting the full revelation of the mystery hidden from the foundation of the world, proclaiming *redemption from sin* and remission of sins in the name of Christ, the Son of God, to all creation. Thus inviting them to the marriage.

5. But they made light of it. Who does not, where Christ crucified soever is not? How can it be otherwise? The old Adam nature must make light of a marriage in which it can feel no interest. Then, if man will retain this nature, will be enslaved by it, with its awful inheritance of woe, he parts with his inestimable birthright for a mess of pottage. This Esau nature does not deny the birthright. No; in his hypocrisy he will cry after it, yet he makes light of it; he puts the fatness of the earth before the dew of heaven. He wants the dew of heaven, but how? only as subject to the fatness of the earth. So one goes to his farm, another to his merchandise—lawful occupations, in which the fatness of the earth is exhibited—but they are engrossed, “they mind earthly things.” But there is a remnant, in whom the Esau nature comes out in its striking characteristics. These would not be absorbed, engrossed in worldly matters, but devote themselves to religious things—as doctrine, ordinances, rites, ceremonies—labour in the Word of God, and not in the crude earth; but they are hypocrites, they regard not the heavenlies. They are all one, these and those; they know not Christ, have not learned him, have not suffered in the flesh, know not what it is to be redeemed, to put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, which is to put off principalities and powers (*απεκδυσαμενος*—Col. ii. 15; iii. 9); therefore, they exhibit all the concentrated malignity of evil, and that against a condition indispensable in Christ, which the call necessitates in order to come to the marriage. This parable, as the former, shows how men will of themselves come to the marriage, so seize on the inheritance; for they come not according to the kingdom, in the wedding garment.

7. But when the king heard thereof : as if, in the whole history of creation, such a thing was unknown ; for where, in the history of the world, from the fall of angels and of men—where, in the history of all intelligent beings, and of the malignity of evil, can be read the awful deceitfulness, the desperate wickedness, of the human heart, which thus exhibits itself against the servants of the king ? who in love sends forth his servants to call those who know these things to the marriage of his Son. But why is it so ? Why is man so enthralled ? Simply because sin will not be crucified, the flesh will not be mortified, the old nature will not be put off. Then the king was wroth, and he sent forth his judgments as of old time. And although he destroyed these murderers, and burned up their city, it is quite consistent with the parable that any one of them was at the marriage feast without the wedding garment.

8. Having, then, revealed his judgment against sin, and, so far as the human family was concerned, that judgment taught the removal of the part, that what remained should be righteousness unto the Lord. Hence this judgment is a more pressing call to the rest. The king now says, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy—*αἱοι*—that is, possessed not *a condition* according to it, of like value to it : such is the meaning of the word. These are the words of the king. They are solemn and awful words. The right interpretation of them, that they may have and possess their true value, demands the unbroken connexion with all that goes before ; they imply all that is contained in the preceding parable, all that the Father has done in the revelation of the covenant. Here is no room for sensational teaching, for speculative truth. Then does the king regard any worthy ? All have come short of the glory of God. Then what is it, since these should have been worthy, and were destroyed because they were not ? It is a condition, not, indeed, according to the standards of men, but one according to God—one meet for the marriage. It is the pure and holy vessel—for the servants of the King preach the kingdom, they preach Christ crucified—meet to receive the Only Begotten of the Father, and to as many as receive him, to them he gives power to become the sons of God—to them that believe into his name.

9. While this condition is indispensable, the king does not

ignore the helpless condition in which sin has placed all men, but calls all out of darkness into light, from the power of Satan unto God. But it rests with man whether he obeys the call or not. Go ye, therefore, into the highways. Go, where none may escape your voice, and bear your testimony. Call as many as you can find unto the marriage. The call is universal, and no outward circumstance is of any moment if we obey, but if not, then our privileges will enhance our condemnation.

10. The servants did as they were commanded. They gathered them as they preached Christ, who said, If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me—the Son, in whom I will reveal the Father. They preached Christ crucified, lifted up in the heart, and so men came to the wedding. They gathered both the evil and the good—the Esaus and the Jacobs. The evil are here placed as first, as including all those who, with the “evil” eye, go after their own covetousness, as those whom he was now addressing. “The evil” is equivalent to “not having the wedding garment.” However, the truth includes all men, and, as with the labourers with the evil eye who take the reward, so here the evil come in to the marriage. The good, like the good ground into which the seed is cast, know Christ, have learned him, count all things as lost for Christ, that, being found in him, they may have the righteousness which is of God by faith. Thus, the evil and the good are gathered together, and of the former it may be more tolerable with some who, in the eyes of men, are greater sinners, than with others who are not.

11. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment. Is there, then, any doubt what this is? It is said, “This garment *is the imputed and inherent righteousness of the Lord Jesus* put on symbolically at baptism, and, *really*, by a true and living faith.” What is an inherent and imputed righteousness when there is but one—Jehovah our Righteousness? The marriage itself is righteousness, which is oneness with God in the Spirit of the Son. But the wedding garment is not righteousness, but the garment of salvation, which is judgment—Christ himself. As the Apostle Paul says, by the faith of Christ, then he has righteousness *which is of God* by faith. There can be no righteousness of the old Adam, for if righteousness could come by it, then Christ died in vain; but, he says, I am crucified with Christ,

nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life I now live in the flesh I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. He lived Christ crucified, and his righteousness was the life of the Son of God. The calling is still the same. It is the calling of God *in Christ Jesus* (Phil. iii. 14); and the Apostle, though perfect in his faith, counts himself not to have apprehended that for which he is apprehended of Christ Jesus, but he follows on.

He brings out the truth, and shows where men fail. He takes one, as himself once a strict Pharisee, who follows after the law of righteousness—love, the operating principle of the divine nature, but does not attain to it; and wherefore? because he did not possess it in faith—in Christ Jesus, but sought it by the works of the law—by the old Adam obeying an outward law. The argument of the Apostle gathers around the same truth to which our blessed Lord has just referred:—They stumbled at that stumbling stone—Christ crucified. (Rom. ix. 31—33: 1 Cor. i. 23.) This is where men for the most part do stumble; for if Christ be in you, the body is dead *that you may be* married to another, to the Son of God. (Rom. i. 4: and John i. 12.) So in the Old Testament, Christ is the end, the *τελος*, the fulfilment of the law for righteousness which Moses describes, saying, The man which doeth these things shall live in them. In Christ he is holy as he is holy; in the Son of God he is righteous as he is righteous.

Friend, he says, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? The Lord himself has, on a former occasion, explained, where he says, The kingdom of the heavens suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. The Shechemite forced the daughter of Jacob. The *uncircumcised* wrought folly in Israel, therefore is he destroyed, even when he would put off the flesh, in its outward form, that he might be one with the covenant. And now the king, in tranquil and serene majesty, says, Friend. He is still the same. He is a Friend that sticketh closer than any brother, but he cannot be one with that condition with which man would make him one. “Friend” is, then, no ominous compellation, but it is one of the deepest import in the midst of these awful and momentous truths. To make him one with such a condition as the old Adam, would be for him to cease

to be what he is. Who is there in this busy, money-making, luxurious, self-indulgent world that can, with an uncrucified heart, take to himself the appellation, Friend. Many of the relationships of life are no more like their original antitypes than sin is like holiness. Selfishness is at the root of all. Man forces his way in ; he enters not by the door, which is Christ, but climbs up some other way, and so is a thief and a robber. He seizes upon the inheritance, defiling the temple. In the midst of this unsullied glory, such an one stands in his filthy rags ; he is stripped like the withered fig-tree, and in all the filth of the flesh he is speechless, being self-condemned.

13. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Man destroys himself—not only so, but from the nature of things, he would destroy the Most High. He rejected a true deliverance, a true redemption in Christ, which would have not only set him free from that which was unholy, but made him worthy to receive all the fulness of God. This decree of the king is no arbitrary decree, but it expresses the awful condition in which man rivets his soul with the chains of an everlasting doom. He is now driven by a centrifugal force from the centre of life, light, and all blessings, into an outer darkness, where grievous woe and bitter remorse increase in the terrible experience of the unfathomable future.

14. Many are called, but few are chosen—are called out. They make not the calling effective, as the Lord has abundantly shown. The “many” is put for “all.” All men are on one common platform, but few only make effective what is for all.

A simple review of this, and the chapters xx., xxi., will show how completely the teaching of a “sovereign and elective love,” as giving to some an effectual healing, is answered. Peter would consider himself entitled, before all, to the consideration of his Master. The sons of Zebedee, in their exclusiveness, would have the right and left hand of the Lord in glory. And so the chief priests, scribes, and Pharisees, in their self-esteem and conceit claimed to be of the kingdom. To the former, the two blind men is the answer ; to the latter, the publicans and harlots. Then, who are they who now indulge in their own self-com

placency and self-gratulation, and would draw the line? Let them rather go, and in all godly sincerity scrutinize themselves, and see if they have the wedding garment, for God is no respecter of persons. He calls all men to keep judgment and do righteousness.—Appendix (D).

15. In the careful use of the most expressive facts, Matthew yet feels how utterly impossible is it to set forth the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of the heart of man.

The Pharisees now take counsel how they can entangle Jesus in his words. They have not altogether misunderstood him. His words were unmistakeable that the kingdom should be taken from them and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. Many understand the import of the sacred text as verse after verse is explained to them, but they will not obey it. So had the Pharisees understood not only his claim to be the Christ, but the nature of his kingdom.

They take counsel with the Herodians. These two sects are political enemies. But now they are one, and fulfil the prediction as they take counsel together against Jehovah and his Christ, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. Can any language more fearfully express the desperate wickedness of sin in the heart of man than this? Pharaoh, the incarnation of evil, the representative of Satan, said to Moses, Who is Jehovah? I know not Jehovah; I will not let Israel go. But Jehovah revealed his mighty hand and outstretched arm in redeeming his people. Now, he sends his Christ, in all his power, in the full revelation of himself, to destroy the devil and all his works, that he might sanctify unto himself a people zealous of good works. But what is the counsel against him? What is not sin here working in these men to do? What does it not work in all men to do who do not obey the truth? They would burst their bands. They would separate Jehovah and his Christ, for they hate judgment. They would seize upon the inheritance without it, and so they cast away their cords, even their redemption. Sin is now no longer bound. The kingdom is virtually taken from them, and it is so visibly as these Pharisees take counsel with the Herodians, and sin comes forth in all its hostility and subtle malignity. And however it may appear to succeed for a time, yet Jehovah will laugh them to

scorn, will have them in derision as he sets his King upon holy hill of Zion. (Ps. ii.)

They come confessing Jesus to be true—to be all he claim to be, the Christ; that he had taught them the way of God truth—to be one with him, to be united to him, and *that regarded no man's person*. Outward circumstances had not with him a moment's consideration; scribes and Pharisees, high priests and Sadducees, publicans and harlots, were all alike, and with greater verbal testimony could they give to him? But with they come to him, saying, Tell us, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not? They expected he would commit himself to one party—that is, if he answered according to the Pharisee or popular party, he would be an enemy to Cæsar but if he answered according to the other, or Herodian side, would not only deny his claim to be the Son of David, but also weaken his own popularity. But Jesus, knowing their wickedness, seeing the evil working in them, said, Why tempt ye me, hypocrites? They come adopting his words, adopting his teaching, professing the utmost humility before him who regards man's person; but he unmasks them, seeing Satan in them again tempting him. In Peter it was in ignorance, here it is in hypocrisy.

Jesus, taking them according to the tenor of their words admitting him to be the true King, true not as opposed to false but as the substance opposed to its shadows, teaching the way of God in truth, which they profess to follow—says, Show me the tribute money. Having unmasked their hypocrisy, he now speaks according to truth.

The money is the denarius, the Roman name for drachma. The Lord has already taught how that the kings of the earth take tribute, not of their children, but of strangers. In the land of promise, the land of their *inheritance*, symbolical of their unity and their oneness with God, the Jew would naturally be galled by the yoke of the foreigner, and the question now put in its significant form would claim consideration, but for the fact they would not see why he was in the land. All their past history taught them that because of sin and transgression the judgments of God overtook them—calling them to do judgment, to love mercy, and so walk humbly with their God. Pointing to the tribute money Jesus asks, Whose image is this? And whose superscriptio

They answer, Cæsar's. The circulating coin bore witness to the whole nation being under tribute. But in judgment God remembers mercy. When he sent the Roman into the land, he yet imposed the tax, which ever reminded them of their true freedom—the ransom of their souls. Their paying the tribute money to Cæsar should be the expression of their submission. Peter says, Honour the king. Why so? Because of your Master, the true King. Honour the shadow for his sake, and you do so only in an entire and unreserved submission. As he elsewhere says, Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God. How the king may conduct himself is of little matter. It is everything how we conduct ourselves. Therefore Jesus says, Render to Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's—"If you are a true tree in the vineyard of God you will render its fruits, and you will be the first to do as I tell you, else you will be only a fruitless fig-tree, denying the root which bears you"—and render to God the things which be God's. What is this? This is the true ransom of the sanctuary, the true fruit of the root, to partake of the sufferings of Christ, to crucify the old man—to do judgment; else you savour *not the things which be of God*, but those which be of men (xvi. 23). The true King has restored the image in which man was created. It was lost by the fall. It was restored according to the covenant, attested by the waters of the deluge, and man went forth with the blessing of God. (Acts ix. 6.) So we are the Lord's, and we are to glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits, which are his. The superscription on every man is "Holiness unto the Lord," and where this is there is a witness to the true King, and thus we render to God the things which be God's.

23. The same day the Sadducees came, &c. Matthew notices this fact because of the intense oneness of the truth. The Pharisees believe a resurrection, but deny the Christ. They reject judgment, but God is a God of judgment. He executeth judgment, for he *smote the first-born in Egypt*. This truth was not a reality in them. The Sadducees reject righteousness, they deny the resurrection. These now come asking a question, by which they would entangle the Lord. It was a question with which no doubt they had perplexed their religious opponents—the Pharisees.

Some take courage in their attacking the truth when they find others, with stammering lips, failing to keep knowledge, but

these men come to one who does know the Scriptures and the power of God. The law of Moses is with them a dead letter. They cite Deut. xxv. The citation contains the principles of the covenant. If there be a controversy, and they come before the judges, they are to give judgment. Judgment and righteousness are vindicated. He that witnesses to judgment is called the righteous, and is accounted such; and the wicked is condemned. His wickedness must be purged away. He is to receive forty stripes, no more. This forty, in its mystic signification, as representing a life or generation, signifies that this threshing is as a life-long reality that he may live, that he may so put away evil and partake of righteousness. The forty stripes must not be exceeded, else he becomes vile to his brethren. His name is put out of Israel. This truth is again set forth by an illustration from common life: Ye shall not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. It is threshed, and the ox is not muzzled, in order that he may partake of it. So man is threshed, that he may partake of the blessing of life—that he may eschew his wickedness, and partake of righteousness. Thus the covenant is clearly set before us, yet it is again with the correlative truth of righteousness more prominently brought out. The relations of brother and wife are simply on account of the revelation of the Father, so that in the Son, and united to him, we have righteousness. The two brothers and one wife are as one person in relation to judgment and righteousness.

It is said when brethren dwell together, and one dies having no child, the *wife of the dead* shall not marry a stranger. The dead one represents the same truth as the threshed corn—a separation effected by the flail of God. It is the death of the old Adam nature, whereby the soul is set free, and is as a widow to be married to another—not to a stranger, but to a brother. Thus, this legal marriage is not to dwindle down to the barren idea of preserving their families. The term brother at once leads the mind to the idea of a common Father. Wherefore her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her, and it shall be that *the first born* which she beareth shall succeed to the name of the brother that is dead, that *his name* be not put out in Israel. Nothing can be clearer than the necessity of a death as preceding

a new life—a death to sin preceding the resurrection life—the first-born life. So, then, when we are dead to sin—have judgment—render to God the things which be God's, then is raised up in the soul by God his name; as Paul says, "Ye are dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who rose again, that ye might bring forth fruit unto God." (Rom. vii. 4.)

But if he refuse to take the woman to wife, before the elders of the city, saying, "I like not to take her," then the line of conduct, marked out for the widow, is clear and instructive. She is to loose his shoe from off his foot before the elders, and to spit in his face: signifying thereby that he is, notwithstanding the death, only in the filth of the flesh, and unholy. Instead of going on to perfection in a death to sin and new life to God, he despises the covenant. To loose the shoe from off his foot, is to make him one with the dead and unclean. It signifies what he is that he rejects his redemption and separation unto a holy God, so despises the resurrection, the first-born—life.

Moses and Joshua were commanded to take off their shoes, because the place whereon they stood was *holy* ground. In the burning bush Jehovah revealed himself in all the reality of his holiness, as in the midst of men, and they were not consumed. So, also, when the captain of the host appeared to Joshua. These two exceptions prove the rule, for they must not be separated from that which is holy.

For the widow, *who was separate from the unclean*, to take off the shoes of him who professed to be an Israelite, having an inheritance in Jehovah, was a rejection, not of the true Israelite, the true son of God, but of the old Adam nature, which hates *that which is purged of it*. Therefore, not to raise up this new life in Israel, is to go back into Egyptian bondage, to be unholy, to have one's name blotted out of Israel; to be as saltless salt trodden under foot of men. He proving that he was no Israelite, the widow acts accordingly, and shows that he is only the flesh in its filth.

25. The Sadducees bring forth a case of seven brethren, who, one after another, die, leaving no issue. The mentioning of seven brethren, and this more than once, cannot be without meaning. It is an expressive testimony to the covenant, and on that side of

it which points to a death to sin, the death of the first-born of Egypt, in order that a new life, a first-born life, according to God, might be raised up. It admits, by implication, the whole argument of the Lord, when he answered the Pharisees with the Herodians. In the providence of God, the Sadducees bring forth a case which finds its truth in themselves. They understand not the passage cited; they fail to apprehend the spiritual import of the citation, for they reject the resurrection. Brother after brother fails to raise up seed to the first, and herein they see not their own condition. The case is, indeed, a most extraordinary one, not only in the repeated marriages, but in the failure to bring forth even a first-born. And it was, indeed, one well calculated to raise in the minds of these doctors of divinity a question of the highest import, as it was to them of insuperable difficulty, even as they conceived it would be to him whom they now addressed. The Sadducees may have imagined the case, or, in the providence of God, it may have occurred, but they would have taken a safer and proper course had they asked, How is it, that after death, and a brother fulfilling a brother's part, there was not a first-born given to raise up the name of him who died?

29. Jesus, answering, said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, and the power of God. The Lord hereby intimates that the Scriptures are known not in the letter but in their spiritual import. They reveal spiritual and eternal realities—a kingdom to be seen and entered, which cannot be known but in the power of God realised, delivering us from all evil, and blessing us with all good. What is the power of God to him who knows the Scriptures? Is it not to possess Christ the Son of God? Christ crucified, by whom the old Adam is dead, is the power of God; then, to as many as thus receive him—the soul, as a widow, would receive him as a true brother in Israel—to them he gives power to become sons of God. This is the marriage feast which requires the wedding garment. Did they thus understand the Scriptures and the power of God, they would understand that in the resurrection, even now in the blessings of the covenant, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. These angels are the representatives of holiness, wherein there can be no sin, no death; but marriage is an earthly compact, an institution for time. It not only raises up generation after generation,

as life following death, but is a continual sign of union, of oneness with the Son of God, of which the resurrection life is the reality. For he that hath the Son hath life. And where this life is possessed there is no need of marriage, for it is the resurrection life, it is already the first-born life, yet we have its glorious consummation, when all that offendeth and maketh a lie shall for ever be put away.

If these men, instead of looking at man's earthly condition, instead of reasoning from their own narrow ground to heavenly truth, had reasoned from heaven to earth, had taken their stand on the ground of revelation, they would have understood how that angels were created, not according to the laws of human existence, but as the sons of God, coming forth without any intermediate parentage ; for all stand in relation to one Father only, in whom all earthly relationships, which guide and influence us, must merge. And thus, when we put off the old Adam, and put on the new man, created after God in righteousness and holiness of the truth, there is now, as there will be, when all the conditions of earth shall have passed away, but one family, bound together in the indissoluble bonds of a holy and never-failing love, and ever dwelling in the presence of the everlasting Father.

31. They come asking a question from the Scriptures, clothed in words most significative of the covenant, and the Lord Jesus answers them accordingly : he takes them back, not only to the beginning of their national life, but of all things, including the angels, to the foundation of the covenant itself. Jehovah appeared to Moses in the burning bush, and, as Moses drew nigh to behold the sight, he was commanded to take off his shoes, for he was on holy ground. He was taught the universal truth, that God is in the midst of men, and they are not consumed ; because in the revelation of himself, in all the fearful reality of his holiness, they are redeemed, they are holy. No man is common whom God has cleansed. He reveals himself as the I AM, the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac, the Elohim of Jacob :—Father, Son, and Spirit. It is the covenant formula ; and it takes us back to the beginning of all things. Moses realised it as he took off his shoes, being on holy ground. But the Lord says these words were spoken to them. God was, in all the fulness of his covenant, revealing himself to them. He, therefore, could not be the God of the dead, but of the living. And this they would have known, did they know the Scriptures and the

power of God. Their question, then, shows that he is not their God. They know not what it is to put off the shoes and be one with the holiness of God, as Moses was taught; or to keep them on, and be separate from the dead, and perform the part of a brother in Israel. (Luke xv. 22.) By their denying the resurrection life they have no spiritual perception of the passage to which they refer, and so are as those whose name in Israel is, "The house of him that hath his shoe loose" (Deut. xxv. 10); they are in the filth of the flesh, are dead before God, therefore he is not their God.

33. The multitudes were astonished at his doctrine. They understood him. His word comes home with all its mighty power to the conscience and understanding of the simple and unprejudiced. And here we cannot but again infer, that the Lord's teaching was full, and what the Evangelist records is only a condensed form of his discourse. If so, we have a glorious opportunity afforded to follow him in his argument, as it naturally and connectedly unfolds itself.

34. When, therefore, the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.

35. One of them, a lawyer—a scribe, one versed in all the problems and technicalities of the outward law, comes and asks the question, which the scribes themselves found difficult to solve, saying, Which is the great commandment in the law? They, like most, regarded the decalogue as enforcing the observance of certain preceptive commandments, whereas it enforced a *condition* of soul which, according to its law, would fulfil all that was written. He answers their question by taking the ground the very question itself assumes, and so places them as appropriating the covenant. He vindicates the truth, and lifts it out of the sphere to which they would reduce it. He shows how the covenant is realised in Christ the Son of God—in Melchizedek—King and Righteousness. If we are delivered from the body of *death*, and possess the Spirit of *life*, both in Christ Jesus, then we perceive the law, or operating principle, of the Holy Spirit, by whom it is shed abroad in the heart; and it is love. It sets us free from the law of sin and death ever dwelling within.

All that man can boast of in the flesh, all the glory of man, all that he can attain to in this life, in religious discipline and

theological knowledge, or otherwise, the Apostle counts as dung. (Phil. iii. 8.) But a holy love, which springs from a vital union with the Lord, is fruit; it comes forth attesting its source, and it is an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice *acceptable*, well pleasing, *to God*. (Phil. iv. 18.) Such, indeed, is the distinction between what is the old Adam nature—the fruitless fig-tree, and what is of a noble tree of the Lord's right hand planting.

With this love we love the Lord our God—Jehovah our Elohim, with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. This love thus gives account of itself. It tells us whence it comes, and whither it goes. It faileth not. Can we conceive a holier or nobler principle, which, so to speak, binds in one the Three Persons of the Godhead,—such is the holy principle planted in the heart by the indwelling Spirit of God. And we love our neighbour as ourself. It must be so. Had it been simply in the first commandment, the Father, instead of Jehovah thy Elohim—the covenant formula—whom we so love, then the Lord would have used the term “brother,” whom we were also to love as ourself; but this love takes the covenant in all its completeness. We not only love the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but, in the all-embracing love of the Father, the self-sacrificing love of the Son, and the never-failing love of the Spirit, we love our neighbour as ourself. It is the very law of the divine nature. If it is commended to us by the fact, that when we were sinners, the Holy and the Righteous One became sin, accursed of God, for us, to bring us unto God, there can be no qualification of it, by reason of the wrong-doing of others. We mourn sin, and in all meekness we exhibit a holy love to our enemies.

If, then, I possess this love, and it operates towards myself, what is it that I love? Do I love that nature wherein there is a law ever operating to destroy that love—the law of the Spirit? No: there will be a continual striving to put off self, to crucify self. This is the truest love to oneself, that we may possess the grace of God in all its purity and power. He, then, that would love his neighbour as himself, would seek not only to alleviate the miseries and trials of this life, but to deliver another from all the oppression of the enemy. And so, even enemies become more truly objects of pity and commiseration. The love of our never-failing High Priest, who can be touched with the feeling

of our infirmities, should, in us, operate towards all, and especially towards those who are in ignorance and far out of the way of it. This love is a holy love, and the Lord inculcates such, which never yields to unrighteousness, but is ever in antagonism to it. It binds closer and closer in the bonds of the covenant. This love easily obeys the command, If thine *enemy* hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink : for it knows that he is under a more terrible bondage than the mere privation of temporal things. But if we love the creature, the love of God is not in us. True love desires that, in all, created in the image of the Triune God, that image may be restored in all the freshness, beauty, and power of the everlasting covenant ; and so, we love our neighbour as ourself.

40. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets. Thus, the Lord teaches that the eternal truths of *judgment and righteousness*, exhibited in a holy love, have ever been the principles to reveal the whole counsel of God. Thus, God works in us. Thus, love fulfils the law. And so the beloved disciple writes, Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love.

41. We have now before us a lovely example of all that he had been teaching. The Lord himself loves his God perfectly, and his neighbour as himself. Notwithstanding their subtle endeavours to entrap him, he had taught them the true Christ, the Son of the living God ; how to possess him, and to be one with him, and to have his holy love operating within. And now, while they are gathered together, he is still, in all his unchanging love, yearning for their deliverance, calling them to consider, saying, What think ye of Christ ? He could read their inmost thoughts, and may have perceived one and another suggesting, " May it not be the Christ ? " However, after his direct and indirect teaching, he asks, What think ye of Christ ? Whose Son is he ? They reply, David's. Had they understood what it is to render to God the things that are God's, and to possess eternal life, which is given us in the Son, they would have given a different answer.

The Lord puts two distinct questions. They reply directly to neither. God's controversy with man is, he will not think, will not consider. They ask Jesus concerning tribute, saying, " What

think ye?" He showed them that he was himself their tribute money, the ransom of their souls. And what he thought of the truth, was it a practical reality in their souls? Did they, indeed, think of the Christ, then the one endeavour of their life would be, that Christ should live in them; that they were crucified with him. If they had so thought of the Christ, the answer to the second question would have been, he is the Son of God, in whom we possess Jehovah, our righteousness. To both an answer could have been given in the person of Melchizedek—a King and Righteousness. And so, they would have spoken according to the Scripture (Ps. cx.), to which the Lord now brings them, saying, How, then, does David, *in Spirit—the condition of his soul*—call him Lord, Adonai, saying, Jehovah said unto *my* Adonai, sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool? Jehovah, then, is the true King, who slays all his enemies. He is the true David, and so David became the honoured type, because he was a man after God's own heart; *he slew all his enemies*. The Christ was the Son of the true David; and as the Lord, he was the Son of God. And he is our Adonai, or Lord, when we have the Spirit of Christ. (Rom. viii. 9, 10.) This word, Adonai, conveys the idea of master, of pre-eminence, as Jacob would courteously and respectfully address Esau. It conveys also the idea of ownership, and that *in marriage*, as Sarah addressed Abraham, calling him lord. The word is almost invariably associated with the idea of marriage, and it expresses lordship, not over a slave, but over one raised to the highest honour and dignity. The idea of marriage connected with the word is evident from its use in the Psalms, as in the one hundred and tenth. Through Christ we render to our Adonai the things that are his. We are *thus willing* in the beauty of holiness. We are then as the womb of the morning, while he has the dew of his youth. Again, in the eighth, the adoring soul united to him thus exclaims, O Jehovah, my Adonai, how excellent is thy name in all the earth; thy glory is above the heavens. Out of the *mouths of babes and sucklings* hast thou perfected praise. Thus Abraham understood Jehovah (Gen. xv. 1, 2), saying, I am thy shield and exceeding great reward—thy judgment and thy righteousness—both in Melchizedek, from whom he received the bread and wine. Wherefore Abraham replies, Adonai Jehovah, what wilt thou give me, seeing

I go childless? And if we would find one proof more conclusive than any, we would turn to Ps. xlv. 10, Harken, O daughter consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house—this is the wedding garment, it is Christ, it is the *beauty of holiness*;—so shall the king desire thy beauty: he is Adonai; worship thou him. And he is Jehovah.

Another and very important question follows: Then if David, in Spirit, called him Lord, how could he be his Son? David, in Spirit, was as the bride, all glorious within, for he had, according to his name, put away all that was of man; so he possessed Melchizedek. If David, then, was united to the true King, to the true Lord, and looked up to him as the true bride should, how was the Lord David's Son? He was so only as the Son of the true David, who slew all his enemies. Thus, while he was setting before them the truth, he was, in mercy, warning them to flee from the wrath to come.

Thus the Lord, in the questions put, gathered up all that he had before taught, directly or indirectly. The vineyard is the covenant revealed. And it is so in holiness, the fruit of which is judgment. It is so in Christ, for when in the wine-press we suffer in the flesh, we cease from sin, and wine comes forth as the fruit of the divine life, of righteousness, an essential part of the feast; while in the marriage feast, which is here revealed, the necessary condition which was lacking was the wedding garment—Christ. This wedding garment and the wine attest respectively the two truths to which our Lord witnessed as Melchizedek (chap. ix. 16, 17).

46. The Lord's hearers are confounded. They reject the beauty of holiness, for in Christ he presents unto himself a Church without blemish, without spot, wrinkle, or any such thing. But they cut themselves off from it; they trample under foot the blood of the everlasting covenant. Self-convicted, they answer him not a word; they ask no more questions, but in stolid unbelief they hardened their hearts as the nether millstone.

CHAPTER XXIII.

- 1 THEN spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, saying, The
2 scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat : all therefore whatsoever they
3 bid you observe, *that* observe and do ; but do not ye after their works : for
4 they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne,
and lay *them* on men's shoulders ; but they *themselves* will not move them
5 with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of
men : they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their
6 garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the
7 synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi,
8 Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi : for one is your Master, *even* Christ ;
9 and all ye are brethren. And call no *man* your father upon the earth : for
10 one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters : for
11 one is your Master, *even* Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall
12 be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased ; and
he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.
- 13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye shut up the
kingdom of heaven against men : for ye neither go in *yourselves*, neither
14 suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe unto you, scribes and
Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence
15 make long prayer : therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Woe
unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye compass sea and land
to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more
the child of hell than yourselves.
- 16 Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the
temple, it is nothing ; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the
17 temple, he is a debtor ! Ye fools and blind : for whether is greater, the
18 gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold ? And, Whosoever shall swear
by the altar, it is nothing ; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon
19 it, he is guilty. Ye fools and blind : for whether is greater, the gift, or the
20 altar that sanctifieth the gift ? Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar,
21 sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. And whoso shall swear by the
22 temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. And he that
shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that
sitteth thereon.
- 23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye pay tithe of
mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier *matters* of

the law, judgment, mercy, and faith : these ought ye to have done, and not
24 to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and
swallow a camel.

25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye make clean the
outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion
26 and excess. *Thou* blind Pharisee, cleanse first that *which* is within the cup
27 and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you,
scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres,
which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's
28 bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous
unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

29 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! because ye build the
tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and
30 say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been
31 partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be
witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed
32 the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents,
33 ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell !

34 Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes :
and *some* of them ye shall kill and crucify ; and *some* of them shall ye
35 scourge in your synagogues, and persecute *them* from city to city : that
upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the
blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias,
36 whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you,
All these things shall come upon this generation.

37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them
which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children
together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye
38 would not ! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto
39 you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that
cometh in the name of the Lord.

1. THESE words of the Lord are very remarkable. He has just put to silence the scribes and Pharisees, and turning to the multitudes, and to his own disciples, he says, The scribes and Pharisees seat themselves in Moses' seat : all things whatsoever they say unto you, do and keep ; but do not according to their works : for they say, and do not.

These words he addresses to his own disciples. How important, then, is it that we understand the exact sense in which the Lord uses the phrase "Moses' seat." He used it no doubt to give emphasis to the one great truth he desired to inculcate. The

scribes and Pharisees *knew it, but would not obey it*. And so now the heart of man, notwithstanding its vain and boastful progress, will obey anything and everything but this one truth which lies in the forefront of the Lord's teaching.

There is a righteousness of the law; it is that to which the prophets witness—Jehovah our Righteousness. They possessed this righteousness, for the Spirit of Christ dwelt in them. And the Jews were commanded, because Jehovah their Elohim had revealed himself, bringing them up out of Egypt to do his judgments, to witness to redemption, to keep his ordinances, even the ordinances of righteousness, which if a man do, he *shall live in them*. I am Jehovah your Elohim. (Lev. xviii. 4, 5: Rom. x. 5.) Here, then, the law demands an *inward* condition. It demands a rendering to God the things that are God's—a true *inward* redemption from all evil, and a holy love, as the Lord has just taught. Thus Moses, or the law, taught redemption and life, the two great principles of the covenant, in holiness and love. These men taught the same, but they obeyed them not. And why? Because they would not look within and see how they stood in all the shame of the fall before a holy and a heart-searching God; and so they became as the fruitless fig tree, clothing itself more and more with its leaves.

Instead of doing according to judgment, which relieves the oppressed, breaks every yoke, they bound together heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and laid them on men's shoulders. Whereas the rod of Moses, the yoke of Christ, breaks the bands of wickedness, and lets the oppressed go free. And where this judgment is, there is a light burden. It is that of righteousness—the filial relation to God; not, indeed, a burden that is put on men's shoulders, grievous to be borne, but one put into their hearts, as the law of their truer being. But these men keep enchained the souls of their fellow-men in all the yoke of bondage; for the burden they impose they touch not with one of their fingers, much less in love lead them into all the blessings of the covenant. But in the yoke of Christ, in the law, is revealed a holy God, a loving Father, bringing his children up out of Egypt, laying bare his arm, and with his mighty hand destroying all his enemies, and letting the oppressed go free.

In respect of the covenant, Moses and Aaron, even as the law

and the prophets, attest the truths, judgment and righteousness. Moses, bearing the rod of Melchizedek, wrought judgment—he overthrew the enemies of God; then the High Priest gave the blessing. These truths, as we have abundantly shown, are revealed in Christ the Son of God. Moses' seat, then, is the seat of judgment in the highest and truest sense. And as these men *seat themselves* in it, they possessed not judgment, but reject it—they reject the Christ, for had they believed Moses they would have believed the Christ. But how, then, are they said to be in Moses' seat? It is in reading the law, and giving explanations *according* to it. They chose the chief seats in their synagogues, where they would be an authority in religious discussions, but it would not be then that the Lord's injunction would be applied, but rather in the public ministrations, as the Law and the Prophets were read every Sabbath day. Moreover, in their controversies with the Lord, they show that they are thoroughly acquainted with the law and its commandments, but they say and do not; instead of possessing the righteousness of God, they are only the highest form of human development.

The disciples and the multitudes were to do what they say, but not do after their works. Surely we can discern a broad line of demarcation between the holy commandment ordained into life—for in life, even the life of God, only is it fulfilled—and the works of the flesh. Thus the Lord enjoined the multitudes and his disciples to obey the law as a law of liberty, and not of bondage; for so long as a man lives, is uncrucified, the law has dominion over him. Thus they who did not obey it, were enslaved by heavy burdens, grievous to be borne.

Failing the law of righteousness—a holy love, as the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus—they, with the utmost zeal, go about to establish their own righteousness, even the works of the law—the works of the flesh: even as it is now, one of the remarkable characteristics of the age; for man is fully developing himself in the pride of life. The intellect is insatiable in its thirst for knowledge, and commensurate with it is there a mistaken zeal imposing upon men—upon the flesh—an ornate worship, with its endless details, grievous to be borne: and this while the flesh unblushingly exhibits itself in all its grosser forms.

5. All their works they do to be seen of men. They are all

outward in the flesh. A literal observance of the Word is more demonstrable than a spiritual. The former is in a multiplying of ordinances, the latter is a wrestling, an agonizing with not flesh and blood, but with principalities, powers, and spiritual wickedness.

So far, then, from the eternal truths of the covenant—holiness and love, attesting judgment and righteousness—being only occasional, they are warned against any departure from loving Jehovah their Elohim, *with all* their heart and *with all* their soul. Wherefore were they to lay up the words of Moses in their heart and in their soul, and bind them for a sign upon their head, that they may be as frontlets between their eyes, &c. (Deut. xi. 13—21.) But instead of possessing the covenant in the Spirit of Christ, they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders or fringes of their garments.

The Lord refers to these two distinctive facts as examples how they do all their works to be seen of men. For in doing these two they do all. They take the literal meaning of the words of the law: they have no spiritual conception of it and the writings of the prophets; for they close their eyes, and they close their hearts against the incorruptible seed.

They were commanded to sanctify unto Jehovah all the first-born. (Exod. xiii. 1—16.) The womb is the house of bondage—the Egyptian bondage. Whatsoever, then, first opens it, so to speak, breaks it up, is Jehovah's. Therefore, it is to be separated, set apart. They were to commemorate their redemption out of Egypt, by observing seven days unleavened bread. It thus testified to the covenant by which *their souls* were purged from the old leaven; which truth shall be for *a sign* upon their hand, attesting the mighty hand of Jehovah, and for a memorial between their eyes, signifying the soul blessed of God, that the law of Jehovah may be in their mouth—come forth as the operating law of the Spirit.

Not only is the first-born son to be redeemed, but also every firstling of a beast. Men are not to yield their members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but, as instruments of righteousness unto God, to present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, unto God. Wherefore, there is an express command respecting the ass, the representative of the disobedient and

stubborn nature of man: if not redeemed, it must be destroyed. All the first-born of men must be redeemed, and when thy son in time to come shall ask the reason, thou shalt say, &c. (Exod. xiii. 14, 15); and this is to be for a sign upon thine hand and for frontlets between thine eyes. But the Jews, instead of taking these commands as *signifying* spiritual truths, they took them literally, and wrote them on slips of parchment, and put them in leather, and placed them upon their heads and upon their hands, instead of possessing the glorious reality within. Men fail to see that God requires the reality within, and it *expressing itself* in all their thoughts, words, and works. The above passage refers especially to redemption—the putting off of the old nature altogether, by the mighty power of God's right hand, even as the first-born puts off the womb, never again to enter it, being sanctified unto Jehovah. But it is evident that these men did not put off the old Adam, for they not only used phylacteries, but made them broader, that they might be seen of men.

We now come to its correlative truth, which can be only in the Spirit of the covenant. It is the law of a newer, higher, and truer life. When they come into the land, into the possession of their inheritance—Jehovah is their inheritance—they would love Jehovah their Elohim with all their heart, and with all their soul, and with all their might. And these words of Moses were to be in *their hearts*. (Deut. vi. 4, 9; and xi. 13—21.) Then would they possess the operating principles of the righteous Spirit of God in a clean heart. And they were to teach these words diligently unto their children, and they shall bind them, *for a sign*, upon their hand, and as frontlets upon their eyes, as the soul, a true receptivity for light. But missing the former truth—their true redemption—how can they possess the latter?

They were commanded to put fringes on the borders of their garments, and that they put on the fringe of the borders a ribbon of blue, that they might remember and do all the commandments of Jehovah, and seek not after their own heart and after their own eyes, after which they used to go a whoring. (Numb. xv. 38.) But they reject the covenant, the only ground of holiness and love, while they enlarge the borders of their garments; and so they do all their works to be seen of men.

6. They love power, not, indeed, over evil in themselves, but

over their fellow-men. They love the uppermost rooms at feasts, the chief seats in their synagogues, and greetings in the markets. In religious, educational, social, commercial life it is the same: the ambition of all is a lust of power—a dominion, not, indeed, over the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, but over man. They love to be called Rabbi, Rabbi—leading, indeed, men not to Christ, but from him. In the religious teacher, the Lord recognizes the most specious and subtle forms of deception. Such, in all their assemblies, whether of feasts or of solemn meetings, expect and claim marked distinction, special consideration. In the house of prayer he professes greater devotion, but he forsakes the living God, while he prostitutes the symbols of a holy religion to his own aggrandizement and self-exaltation.

But Jesus bids them not to be called Rabbi, Rabbi, for there is but *one*—this is emphatic in the construction of the sentence—Teacher (διδασκαλος). It is the Spirit of your Father. (Matt. x. 20, and xvi. 17: 1 Pet. i. 11.)

9. The Lord would have them possess a distinct and clear apprehension of the covenant, and know the one Father in the heavens—*εν τοις ουρανοις*. Why should this expressive formula of Matthew be rejected for the adjective, *ουρανιος*? Literally, this would be opposed to *επι της γης*. But if the other be the more difficult, and not be seen in its deep spiritual signification, then, by the laws of criticism, especially as the Lord uses it in Matt. vi. 9, it ought to stand. And they would call him *holy, righteous* Father, which cannot belong to any one on earth. So they would be all brethren.

10. If this be your experience, you will not be called leader or guide, but will follow Christ, have the mind which was in him. You will glory in his cross, by *whom you are* crucified to all. Instead of imposing burdens upon men, you will, by *the mighty hand* of God, remove them. Instead of seeking the chief things of this life, you will take pleasure in all those things which, in a perfect Providence, wean you from them. So will you render to God the things which are God's, and, possessing the wedding garment, be meet for the marriage, and testify to the unselfish, self-sacrificing love of the covenant Three.

In this spirit will you minister to others, and, humbling yourself.

under the mighty hand of God, you will be exalted; but he that exalteth himself, though he may seat himself in Moses' seat, cannot have the one and true Teacher, but will be brought low.

13. Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Such appear to men to be pious, devout, learned. Their righteousness after the flesh is described in Is. lviii. 2: Rom. ii. 17—20: Phil. iii. 5—7. And withal they shut the kingdom of the *heavens* against men—"for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in." Is it possible that teachers seat themselves in Moses' seat, yet go not into the kingdom, and suffer not those who are entering to go in? Does the Lord command his disciples to hear and do what they say, and yet pronounce a woe upon them because they neither enter nor suffer others to enter the kingdom? Then how is it so? We must take the Lord's ground—even that of the truth—in all its simplicity and severity. Then how do men enter the kingdom of *the heavens*—enter into all the blessings of a covenant Triune God? They are born from above: they are born of water and of the Spirit. This water puts away the filth of the flesh—it is Christ; being born of Christ, and then of the Spirit, and, being so born, we are sons of God. This water, then, is not baptism; nor is it the knowledge of a simple interpretation of Scripture; nor a recognition of him of whom the Scriptures testify: for we may have all these things, and yet lack the one thing needful; which is not merely an indwelling Christ, which every man may have—as the Lord said to his enemies, the kingdom of God is within you, but being born of him, so that we demonstrate him; as the Apostle says, I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ *liveth* in me. When thus we carry his cross, bear his yoke, we, *then* in the Son, learn of him—have the Father revealed within. We are then, *de factis*, of the kingdom—we see it, we enter it. To this knowledge of the Father, Christ is the key. It is he alone that casts down every high thing that would exalt itself against the knowledge of God. So is he our redemption. All, then, who, like these men, trust in an outward redemption are hypocrites; they do not put off the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts, but would, with him, seize on the inheritance.

14. There is a beautiful order and fitness in this verse following the former, notwithstanding the objection to it by some. The

Lord has just spoken of the kingdom of the *heavens*, and how perverse teachers close it against men ; and now, despite of them, we see how the great Teacher of Israel is witnessing to them, and in their order. Who is a widow amongst the relationships of life which express the realities of the kingdom, but one who has put off the old man—a soul set free by Christ (Rom. vii. 4), one *entering the kingdom*. Such an one continually prays to the Father to avenge her of her adversary. (Luke xviii. 1 : Rom. vii. 21.) The old man is ever reviving. But these men suffer not those so entering to enter, they devour widow's houses. What is a widow's house ? Literally, these men may impoverish the afflicted widow ; but the Lord's words have a spiritual signification. A widow's house is the soul in Christ which through and in Christ is redeemed from the old nature ; then Christ is a Son over his own house ; whose house are we. We are redeemed from the flesh that our house may be filled with the Spirit of God. But these men devour these houses, they leave them destitute. They know not how to minister Christ, and to minister the Spirit of the living God, but impose burdens, grievous to be borne. And so far from showing how to strive against the revival of the adversary, they, for a pretence or pretext for what they do, make long prayers. Let us not suppose that these men, or the teachers of the present day, do not recognise the truths of Scripture. They admit them, but they will not obey the truth as it is in Christ.

15. Instead, then, of leading men to know the Father in the heavens by first trusting in Christ, and then being sealed with the Spirit, whereby they cry, Abba, Father, they compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when they have done it they make him twofold more *the son* of Gehenna—of death and corruption—than themselves.

The Lord has not been condemning some special fault, however apparent to those whom he addressed, which, others not actually doing, would leave to those upon whom the woe was pronounced, but showing by them how the great truths of the covenant were trampled under foot. Having regard to Christ, he shows how the kingdom is shut ; then, having regard to the Spirit, he shows how the house is made desolate, and, having regard to the Father, he shows how men are made sons of death and corruption instead of life and glory. So, then, Jesus taking the ground of the

covenant in a Triune God denounces *all* that is *not of it and according to it*.

How often have we painfully to sit and hear the simple truths of the covenant perverted. Of this all men are conscious, for can there be a stronger evidence than the fact—since there is but one Christ, one cross, one axe lying at the root of every tree to be made effective—that Christ is divided. Despite the abuse of confidence in the promises of great men, we still adopt the American poet's words:—

“Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time,—
Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwreck'd brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.”

16. Woe unto you, blind guides! As guides they profess to lead others to honour and to glory. Such are condemned. An awful woe awaits them, for there is nothing so proud, so aspiring, so domineering as religious conceit. They are blind; they not only do not enter the kingdom, but they cannot see it. How, then, shall they lead others? The god of this world blinds them. He does it with a counterfeit semblance of truth. How can it be otherwise even now, any more than it was in former times, since there is such a blind following of men? They follow the writings of men, instead of giving to the Bible its unshared supremacy, and seeking the one true Teacher who moved holy men of old to write it. “This reminds us of the dim-eyed old man—the genius of unbelief so poetically described by Coleridge—who, sitting in his cold and dreary cave, talked much and vehemently concerning an infinite series of causes and effects, which he explained to be a string of blind men, the last of whom caught hold of the skirt before him, he of the next, and so on, till they were all out of sight, and that they all walked infallibly straight, without making one false step, though all were alike blind.”
—*Hugh Miller*.

How, then, does the Lord describe these blind guides? Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing, but whosoever

shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor, they say. To take their ground—that is, the outward and literal—the temple is evidently greater than the gold, for it sanctifieth the gold. But if we take the Lord's ground, which they ought to do, we then see how they are blind. The true idea of the temple is the presence of Jehovah, whose presence constitutes anywhere a temple. Christ was a temple; the burning bush was one; the universe is one; the Church is one; man is one. Such was the temple, and the gold of the temple was the symbol of that presence, the symbol of Deity. It is purified seven times, according to the covenant, purged in the crucible from all the dross of the creature, and he that is destitute of this pure metal, is only as dross—a castaway. These blind guides so make the symbol of more importance than the reality. They may say, like their fathers, we did not worship the golden calf, but by it we worshipped our God, who brought us up out of Egypt. This is the lie, for all that is tangible is for the old Adam nature, *and to make that nature worship*, from which the soul is redeemed, is the great lie now blinding the human family.

18. So with respect to the altar and the gift upon it. It is apparent that the altar is greater than the gift. But what is the spiritual truth? This is the brazen altar, the altar of burnt offering which was made of earth or unhewn stone. It is said, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone, for if thou lift up *thy tool* upon it thou hast polluted it. It was not of man, nor of the will of man, but of God. It was the symbol of the created nature of Christ. Christ was the altar; it has upon it the heavenly fire, and whatever is put thereon is in contact with this fire, is a holocaust, it is wholly consumed. Now Christ is the altar. He is emphatically the Holy One of God. And when we come near him—touch but the fringe of his garment (Num. xv. 38, 39), symbol of oneness with his holiness—we are sanctified. Our offering on the altar is ourselves, redeemed by his death from sin and all iniquity, *and so* partakers of his holiness. When thus we suffer in the flesh, we cease from sin.

Two errors are current upon this most vital matter. One is that of Balak, a very common one. It was the error of the Jews. The king of Moab asks, Wherewith shall I come before Jehovah, and bow myself before the Most High God? He would

give abundantly, even to his firstborn, for the sin of his soul, as if God was induced by something like a commercial equivalent to pardon transgression and sin. So, respecting the Jewish people, Jehovah says, To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? (Is. i. 11.) Though you offer me burnt offerings and *your* meat offerings I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat things. . . . But let *judgment* run down as waters and *righteousness* as a mighty stream. (Amos v. 22, 24.)

The other error is thus expressed. "The altar and its sacrifices were a merciful arrangement, and the ground upon which it plainly proceeds is the doomed condition of men as sinners, and the purpose of God to save them from its infliction. Their soul or life has, through sin, been forfeited to God, and, as a debt due to his justice, it should, in right, be rendered back again to him who gave it." This argument proceeds on a false ground. We should begin with the covenant and not with sinners—with the revelation of the Father and not with the condition of transgressors. Then we shall understand how he has redeemed and blessed his creature. Here is no such question of justice; such a term is not in the Word of God—such a word is, indeed, put for righteousness, which is life. Moreover, a man's condition, through sin, is not one of life any more than sin is life. As a sinner, he is dead, dead already to the fountain and source of all life. Therefore, he has no life to forfeit, but when he departs this life he goes to "his own place." In the day the soul sins it dies. The Mosaic ceremonial proceeds, then, on the assumption that man is redeemed from sin and death, which redemption he is to obey. If he does not, he rejects the covenant, and, *de facto*, is cut off from his people. (Ezek. xviii. 4.) Of these realities he is ever reminded, as the outward law is ever a schoolmaster to bring him to Christ, that he might have a righteous law, even the law of righteousness within his heart, by a righteous Spirit renewed within. Christ, then, is the altar, he *is the holiness* of God, he is the one offering for sin, *being made sin* for us, and, by that one holocaust, one burnt offering, he put away sin and purified unto himself a people zealous of good works, and thus was he our atonement.

19. Which, then, is greater,—the gift or the altar which sanctifieth the gift? They would answer, if they took the Lord's ground

and regarded the altar, accordingly. To this he is leading them, opening their eyes and their hearts ; but, as of old, they close their eyes and harden their hearts.

20. Are we now prepared to follow the Lord, who respects the relative order of these truths ? Does a man, then, swear by the altar ? Does he give his vow, solemn asseveration, or oath, according to these realities ? Does he thus appeal to invisible truths ? Then, what does it mean ? It matters not what he intends,—but what are his words *in the ears of him* who understands their import ? He swears by the altar and *all things* thereon—by the Christ of God, by the holiness of God, and by his own redemption.

21. So he that sweareth by the temple. He swears by it, and by him that dwelleth therein—by his own soul redeemed and purified and by the Holy Spirit dwelling therein.

22. Having brought out into distinct prominence the two great principles of the covenant, as set forth by the altar and temple in Christ and the Spirit respectively, he now turns to the third truth in a Triune God ; for he who truly swears, or, in other words, truly realises the altar and all that is thereon, and the temple and him that dwelleth therein, is in the kingdom ; therefore, he says, He that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God and by him that sitteth thereon. Does the Lord mean to teach that there is one dwelling in the material temple and another on the heavenly throne ? Surely not. Then, where is the connexion ? and what is the truth ? He that is in heaven is the Father, and he is a king. He, then, that realises these truths, is, according to them, only as he is in Christ and the Spirit. He, then, that swears by heaven swears by these. Then, let him act according to them. Such is the simple teaching of the blessed Saviour. He does not condemn men's acts and ignore his great mission. He came, not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And so he is an Exemplar for all who seat themselves in Moses' seat. He justifies his words to his disciples, to do as they say, but do not after their works, for they say and do not. He thus not only justifies his own words, but shows us how, from the very practices of men in respect of holy things, to lead them from error, confusion, and discord, into truth, order, and harmony.

23. He does not forsake them. In truest love, he bears with their impenitence and hardness of heart. He sees them, as he

saw his own disciples, enslaved by the devil, whose children they are, and whose works they do. It is not for any to question the ways of God. However, some do say, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even these men should not have died? (John xi, 37.) Such, indeed, is *the spiritual* condition of these men. But these words of unbelief wound the heart and cause a deep pang in the loving Spirit of the Redeemer. Did they but understand wherein is truest happiness: that it is in perfect liberty, when the will and all that constitutes the individual is merged in, or is supplanted by, the will and love of a Holy Father, whose will is as free as the universe, they would not quip and quibble, but embrace the great salvation.

He teaches these hypocrites wherein is their great mistake, that they are deficient of the wedding garment; that they teach, but do not the law.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! This last word explains:—All their outward appearance is right, but all within is wrong. You tithe mint, anise, and cummin. To tithe is to give a tenth, which, in Scripture, and, therefore, to those who take its ground, signifies totality—all. It expresses, then, a giving of all, *a sitting loose to all*, being crucified to the world and the world to them. But not seeing this—the spiritual signification of their act, and, therefore, not as the expression of an inward reality—the Pharisees and scribes, notwithstanding their profession for the law, paying tithes for all that was titheable, and for all that was doubtful, were only imposing upon themselves burdens contrary to the law.

They acknowledge the necessity of tithing, yet pass over the weightier matters of the law—judgment, mercy, faith. These are that which the altar with all things thereon is:—judgment, the condemnation of sin, the casting out of the prince of this world; mercy, the condition consequent upon this, which is not in the forgiving of sins, but a delivering from sin: If Christ be in you the body is dead, because of sin (Rom. viii. 10); and faith, the realisation of the two former, by the indwelling of Christ crucified, demonstrated in the life. Then, when ye are thus set free from the world, crucified to it and it to you, you will not leave the other undone, for it will be simply the *expression* of the great and weightier matters of the law inwardly possessed. But they are hypocrites.

24. Blind guides! straining out a gnat, but swallowing the camel. These are few words in the midst of solemn truths, of great realities. It appears that the Lord here reaches a sorites. Then what is it? The word rendered gnat is *κωρυψ*, having no doubt its root in the biliterate *כ*, lice; from which, doubtless, the verb *כין*, to stand firm, to be established, is derived; because these insects so adhere to the bodies of men and beasts. They would adhere to the camel, the chief and first of unclean animals. (Lev. xi. 4.) So, then, they are very careful to strain out the unclean insect; or, they are very careful to put away every outward fault; but that to which it adheres, the unclean lump itself—sin, they gulp down; being blind, they see the one and not the other, and so deny their redemption.

If, then, sin and sins stand so closely related, even as the camel and the lice, and they take care to strain out the latter and swallow the former, no words can express like this imagery the folly of hypocrisy.

Then, what is to be said of those, or any one in the history of Christendom, who, famous for military exploits, reputed for intellect and erudition, favoured by nature, high in the esteem of the mighty and the great, with an abundance of the world's goods, take the vows of chastity and poverty and of absolute obedience to the Pope? Are we to condemn such virtuous acts because of this last word? Many, indeed, without them, because of it, do. Can it, then, be said that those strain out the gnat and swallow the camel? It may be said of these who find fault with them, that they gulp both; but of those it may be said, they do swallow the camel, for it is evident that their acts, notwithstanding their apparent sincerity, come under the category of those the Lord condemns. He is condemning hypocrisy; for all that is *merely* outward, and of an outward tendency, is hypocrisy. He is most jealous of an absolute obedience to the created. And the most religious should be the first to show his sheer repugnance to it. It is not what zeal and earnestness may lay on men's shoulders, but what is the inward condition of the soul, whether separated by Christ from the flesh and possessing in the Holy Spirit of God a law that goes forth without effort, revealing the good, perfect, and acceptable will of the everlasting Father.

25. The Lord continues his marvellous and fearful picture of

hypocrisy : he knows its subtle and blinding influence, and therefore does not spare. They make clean the outside of the cup and platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Of the former word, Matthew uses the verb in two places : xi. 12, where it is said the kingdom *suffereth violence* ; and xiii. 19, where it is said the devil snatcheth away the good seed sown. Of all this they are full of. It is a violent possession of spiritual realities, with an uncrucified, *uncircumcised heart*. The latter word, though many words have been substituted for it, must be retained, though an uncommon word. It is an expressive word, and signifies *incontinence*. From their own point of view, and according to their own ideas, they seize upon the covenant *blessings*, trampling under foot *the necessary condition* for them. From God's point of view, regarding what he has done and is doing for them, they requite him with incontinence. And so, they are full of these two things. (Is. i. 21.)

26. How, then, can they be clean at all ? They begin at the wrong end, like the philanthropy of the day, which begins with the outside instead of the inside. To recover the profligate, the drunkard, the fallen, it is thought necessary first to restore them to society. This is the great object in view. But if there be an ulterior object—that of cleansing the inside—it will be found that nothing is more calculated to give a false idea of Christianity than those endeavours. Self-deceived, they consider their restoration to society as the way of conversion to God—they confound appearances with a *radical* change. The Lord shows them how to clean the outside. He does not regard their cleaning as anything. *Clean first*, he says, the inside of the cup, that ye may clean the outside of it.—Appendix (C).

27. They swallow down the camel—the unclean itself ; they are full of ravening and incontinence ; and now, they are like to whited sepulchres, which appear beautiful without but within are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Instead, then, of being in the beauties of holiness, and a temple filled with the Holy Spirit of God, they are a charnel-house filled with all impurity. And why ? Simply because they are hypocrites. They appear outwardly righteous to men. Let us not rush away from these words. What more does society demand than to be righteous unto men ? Does it ever dare ask the question — is it ever

allowed to whisper the bare thought, If all is righteous without, what may be the state within? But what can be more bewildering to a worldly-righteous man, if he would only think, than this public expression of himself:—"We fear that the overthrow of the Roman church, or any great relaxation of her hold of the faith and conscience of Catholic Europe at the present juncture, would be, on the whole, more likely to injure than to advance the cause of Christianity and of human well-being. The great progress of infidel opinions and anti-Christian criticism—the disordered and uncertain state of the chief Protestant churches—the tendency of the Latin mind—the experience of all Romance nations—enforce the belief that whatever might at this time be lost to Rome would be gained, not by a purer form of Christian faith, but by sheer unbelief, by mystical Deism, or by that most lamentable and deadly of all forms of irreligion—utter indifferentism." This is the world's lie: this is the whited sepulchre. It is this absence of a pure faith—or rather presence of an impure faith—that is the cause of indifferentism. Sweep away the *refuge* of lies, and unmask evil wheresoever it may be, and there will be a chance of a pure faith; but substitute an impure faith, and there is none. Such appear righteous unto men, but are full of hypocrisy and impiety; *anomia*—lawlessness.

29. Their scrupulous care to put from them the smallest uncleanness, yet swallowing evil itself; their appearing clean without, yet *seizing* upon what was holy and departing from the holy love of God; their appearing righteous before men, yet full of all that was corrupt and defiling, is so hateful to the Lord—so abominable in the sight of God—that the Lord again brings before them another circumstance, perhaps the last that would, in the judgment of the world, be condemnatory of them, and denounces their hypocrisy, saying, Woe unto you, because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. They claim to be one with all that is holy and righteous, and would separate themselves from their fathers. They condemn their acts and doings, but are blind to sin, which, had they seen, they would in Christ have mourned it; they would, in an humble and contrite heart, have blotted out as a cloud the transgressions

of their fathers, instead of keeping them perpetually before their fellows.

What a fearful aspect of the old corrupt nature is that where it would hide its true nature by magnifying the faults of others and enrobing itself in the garb of truth!

31. They were witnesses to themselves. Their own acts testified to their own consciences, and against their own souls, that they were the true children of them which killed the prophets. What an awful picture of the devil working in the children of disobedience! Unless we see in ourselves this common nature—the inheritance of all the children of the first Adam—which, ever here and there, now and then crops out, with daring effrontery, in the abominations which outrage society, and effectually cast it out, put it off,—*απεκδυσάμενοι*—so in Christ spoil principalities, we are giving up ourselves to all the fearful woes pronounced by the Lord. And what shall be said of that which puts sweet for bitter, light for darkness? for we hear much of the world's enlightenment and the progress of truth—which are only gall and darkness—and so the world is hastening on its own final doom.

32. There is a limit, and the devils know it. They cried out, saying, "Torment us not before the time." But of it man is wilfully ignorant. Therefore the Lord says, Fill ye up the measure of your fathers. They are in the same condemnation with those who slew the righteous prophets of the Lord. All workers of iniquity are filling up this measure, but, being blinded by the god of this world, they do not see it, much less the heinous character of their deeds, though they can see it in their fathers.

33. The truth of God is ever striving to bring man to his right mind. So, then, when the Lord Jesus was, *according to the teaching of the Word of God*, leading these men on to discern spiritual truth, that, by setting their heart to it, they might exercise a spiritual faculty, and they resisted, his words came forth in all their expressive significance, declaring them to be serpents—degraded reptiles, whose venomous bite is death, and therefore a generation of vipers. How can ye escape the judgment of Gehenna?—to be cast out as a loathsome mass of death and corruption; and, that ye may not any more be a pestilence polluting the atmosphere, be left to the scavengers of corruption, the worm, and the fire.

34. Wherefore, because of this, behold I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes. Very remarkable are these words. The truth alone explains them: because of their great wickedness—especial advantages, increased privileges, being despised—not one prophet, not one wise man, nor one scribe, but many, will come in all the power and testimony of the Holy Spirit, witnessing to the spiritual realities of the Kingdom. Commensurate with their hardened and impenitent heart will the grace of God abound. Christ will not give place to the devil—no, not for one moment. But what is and will be the awful doom awaiting those with yet increased advantages, with yet greater privileges, who not only seat themselves in Moses' seat, but would be in Christ's stead, and through the awful deceitfulness of sin are yet in the flesh, trusting in an outward form of Godliness—in every word of doctrine, and in the most studied forms of worship? What is not of faith, is sin. What is not of Christ, is Satan: there is no neutral ground. Let us, then, not be ignorant of Satan's devices. He is darkness, but he comes as an angel of light, a messenger of God. So his ministers mind earthly things—are enemies to the cross of Christ, but would come as ministers of righteousness.

The more we behold the spurious counterfeit of the true, the more must we work and not keep silence. Awful indeed is the warning, for as evil works and time rolls on, the past transgressions of men swell up the measure—as if sin enlarged itself, and strengthened itself—and so bring upon their posterity a sad heritage of woe.

Then where sin doth abound, grace doth much more abound; and advancing time brings with it greater and inestimable blessings, so long as we, undaunted and undismayed, unfurl the banner of the cross, not insensible of what awaits us for the cause of God and of Christ, as we strive to live void of offence before God and man.

He told them that he would send them prophets, wise men and scribes. He was the true Prophet of Israel, the wisdom of God, the true Scribe built up into the kingdom; and they who would come in his name would be so endowed. They would exhort men to turn from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God; they would exhibit the true wisdom of God, being filled with the Holy Ghost, and they would bring forth out of

their treasury things new and old—things of the new creat and of the old, of the invisible and the visible, to meet the necessities of men. And because of this they will be crucified, scourged, persecuted. So was their Master. As he was in this world, so are they. And he who faithfully preaches Christ stirs up the enmity from its very depths, not only in a world lying in wickedness, but also in *his own heart*. But he overcomes himself in Christ, while he suffers persecution in its various forms from those without Christ. This enmity brings down upon those who dwell in it the full tide of wrath, swollen with the accumulations of the past. But let us be faithful unto death, and a crown of glory and of life awaits us. Of this we are reminded by the awful warning before us, which is not to be limited to any period of the Jewish history. Abel was the first witness to Christ. He died to sin, witnessed or expressed by his sacrifice, and, therefore, was persecuted by the son of the bondwoman—the flesh. Isaac, Zacharias, the son of Jehoiada, is in the very act of entering the holy place when he is slain. He is between the altar and the temple—*ναος*, with the blood of the slain victim. Having witnessed to the redemption of the nation, he is now about to bring it, *in life*, before God. By this imagery the Lord carries us to the end of time, when he, the true High Priest, shall come *without sin*, unto salvation, and will then enter with his redeemed into the full blessing of the glory of God. Here, then, in the woes reaching their climax, is involved an awful warning to those on whom the ends of the world are come, and for whom the things were written. We can now read clearly and unmistakably the features of the man of sin, as he is developing himself against the Christ the Lord, who will consume him with the Spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming.

37. Treacherous Jerusalem! with all thy distinguished privileges, with all thy matchless glory, instead of being the first with open arms to receive him who comes in the name of the Lord, and to bless him as thy Lord, thy Bridegroom; instead of receiving him in the beauties of holiness, thou art the first to cast him outside thy gates and to kill him. He will yet come a second time, not only to Jerusalem, but to the whole world, and who is there to bless him out of the house of the Lord? who

there resting in the covenant, made ready and prepared for him? for when he cometh will he find faith upon the earth?

He mourns over the daughter of Zion, over her who rejects her Lord. How has the faithful city become a harlot! It was full of judgment, righteousness lodged in her, but now, murderers. (Is. i. 21.) The preparation of her who should be all glorious within, whose clothing should be of wrought gold, ready for him who loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity is in judgment and righteousness.

We may understand, then, how, notwithstanding her outward appearance, yet unpurged from her uncleanness, she was an abomination to him who was come to her. Shall it be called a warning to the world? Or does it not rather express what should be felt by every one conscious of such a condition of loathing and shame?

What says the Almighty King, that would make a marriage feast for his Son? What says the Bridegroom of her who should be his bride? How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not! He speaks of her as his bride, and he expects children of her, for Jerusalem, which is above, is free—she is not in bondage, is not desolate—which is the mother of us all. (Gal. iv. 26.) He would that she should dwell in the secret place of the Most High, under the shadow of the Almighty, find in him her refuge and her fortress. The purpose of Jehovah is that the bride should be as the Bridegroom, set up on high because she hath known his name. Such, indeed, has been the loving care and tender solicitude of the everlasting Father towards the daughter of Zion, *but she would not*.

How, then, can it be said that the Father shuts out any from his grace? If the Lord comes in all the attractive power of the relation in which he has revealed himself, and we, conscious of evil that would dishonour him and degrade us to the lowest depths of infamy yet refuse him—refuse the sheltering power of his love, and give up ourselves to another, to sin, to work in us all iniquity, that would destroy the Son and seize upon the inheritance—what would be our guilt and condemnation?

38. To obey the flesh, or to follow after it, is not only the basest ingratitude, but to glory in our shame. It therefore

becomes the holy and righteous Father to withdraw his Spirit, and the house is left desolate. No calamity can be more awful than to be left alone by God. Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it ABIDETH alone. If, therefore, we have not the judgment of God, if we have not died with Christ, we are alone—we reject the mercy of God, we are without faith.

39. It is true of all and every one, “Ye shall not see me till ye can say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” No one will be able to say this who has not Christ, for Christ alone gives to every one a temple fit for the indwelling presence and eternal glory of the ever-living God.

CHAPTER XXIV.



1 AND Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples
2 came to *him* for to show him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said
unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall
not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him
privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the
4 sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? And Jesus answered
5 and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall
6 come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye
shall hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that ye be not troubled: for
7 all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall
rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be
8 famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these *are*
9 the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted,
and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's
10 sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and
11 shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall
12 deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall
13 wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.
14 And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a
witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by
Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him under-
16 stand:) then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains: let him
17 which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:
18 neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And
19 woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those
20 days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the
21 sabbath day: for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the
22 beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except
those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the
elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe,
24 it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall
show great signs and wonders: insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they
25 shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore

26 if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert ; go not forth
27 behold, *he is* in the secret chambers ; believe it not. For as the lightning
cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west : so shall also the
28 coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will
the eagles be gathered together.

29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened
and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven
30 and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken : and then shall appear the
sign of the Son of man in heaven . and then shall all the tribes of the
earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds
31 heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with
great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the
four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

32 Now learn a parable of the fig-tree : when his branch is yet tender, and
33 putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh : so likewise ye, when
34 ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily
I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things
35 be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass
away

36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven
37 but my Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming
38 of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they
were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day
39 that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took
40 them all away : so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. There
41 shall two be in the field ; the one shall be taken, and the other left. The
women shall be grinding at the mill ; the one shall be taken and the other
left.

42 Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come
43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what
watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not
44 have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready :
45 in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Who then is
faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his house
46 hold, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant
47 whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you,
48 That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil
49 servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming ; and shall
begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken
50 the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him,
51 and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and
appoint him his portion with the hypocrites : there shall be weeping and
gnashing of teeth.

THE Lord Jesus having left the temple desolate, the disciples show him the immense stones of the buildings. What was their idea of that desolation which he had just pronounced? They did not apprehend the spiritual desolation of the whole nation, which should have been a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to show forth the praises of him who called them out of darkness into his marvellous light, but pointed to the buildings of the temple, which stood like a mass of glistening snow radiant with light, with its huge yet polished stones fitted in one above another, and wondered how they or the house could become desolate. Dilapidation and desolation were to them identical. And so blind were they to the reality, that they regarded only a part as doomed, but the Lord, who knew their thoughts, said, See ye not *all* these things? Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone standing upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

Men still confound the inward and invisible with the outward and visible. From the beginning, in all true worship, God has respect to the heart (Gen. iv. 4), and then to the offering—the outward, as expressive of the inward condition. The disciples have not the least conception of the nature of the desolation. They understood not how Jerusalem should be at unity with herself—her King enthroned within, and the glory of her God filling the sanctuary, filled with judgment and righteousness lodging within—so a witness of the whole nation redeemed with judgment, and her converts (those returning) with righteousness. Thus should every one be a temple of the Holy Ghost, that the whole nation might be *truly one*. But being desolate, its glory and its strength have departed, and so its temple is levelled with the ground, and the people are scattered and peeled, trodden down under foot of the Gentiles in every nation, a by word and a reproach.

They did not understand him. However, he walks on, and reaching the Mount of Olives, he sits down, and mournfully contemplates the present and future of the desolate city. The disciples, thinking and talking over his words, now approach him, and a part—that is, some more forward than others—ask him, When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? They would, then, connect this demolition of the temple and of the buildings with the end of

the world, but they thought of his previously coming, when they should see him again, and bless him out of the house of the Lord.

4. Jesus answering them, said, Take heed lest any man deceive you. Are these twelve the heralds of the kingdom, sent to teach the world, to undeceive mankind, to deliver them from the powers of darkness? The words of Jesus are too significant to be lightly regarded. Doubtless, the foremost of them who addressed the Lord was Peter. He and the rest were not indefectible, much less infallible. The Lord reproves them because they ask a sign. The deceitful heart seeks signs. It is only the flesh that desires what is outward. Then, to seek a sign, or for any to minister to such is to come under the severe reproof of Christ, for they deceive those who ask, ministering to their sinful and adulterous condition.

5. Many, he says, will come with my name (not *εν*, as John xvi. 24 : Mark xvi. 17 ; but *επι*). They will come *not possessing me*, but assuming my name, saying, "I am Christ." So, many assume the name Christian, and deceive many. They who are desirous of the outward and visible, instead of the inward and invisible in themselves, will be deceived. The only way to see and to know these things is to stand aloof, in a condition of heart and mind, in Spirit and in truth, wherein we are not deceived, and watching therein unto the end.

There will be not only false Christs, but wars and rumours of wars. The body of Christ—the true body will be revealed, hence these things must be, for the powers of darkness also will be revealed ; but the end is not yet. Ye are a nation of priests and kings unto God. Such is the house and city of the Most High. But, then, nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom ; unrighteousness will work in all the deceivableness of sin in the hearts of the disobedient. Then, there will be famines and earthquakes, for the creature is made subject to vanity, yet in hope, which is expressed by these birth-throes ; for notwithstanding the unrighteousness of men, it will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God. While the ground is cursed for the sake of man, that he should not put his trust in it, yet the curse becomes a blessing, as the creature, awaiting its deliverance, forces by its

birth-throes into manifestation the sons of God. These things are the beginning of sorrows—*ὀδυνών*—of birth-throes. (Rom. viii. 22.) They are the beginning of a glorious consummation. So they will deliver you to be afflicted, and will kill you, but it will result in a bringing forth a manifestation of the Church. Thus, the great Teacher of all men connects the outward signs of his coming with the great and invisible realities of his kingdom—not, indeed, as isolated signs for us, but as a continual state or condition indicating the final and fast coming redemption. Time, then, is nothing, but the providence of God is perfect, and the outcoming manifestation of the invisible Church is preparatory to a future of glory. Then, he says, when you faithfully and truly reveal my name, will you be hated because of it by all nations, but the trial of your faith, which is more precious than gold and silver that perisheth, though it be tried by fire, is, that it may appear unto praise, honour, and glory at my appearing.

10. Then, when the Church is revealed, is distinct, *being hated* by all nations—there is no concord between the kingdom of God and the world—many within her will be scandalized, will fall away, will hate and betray one another, and false prophets will arise and deceive many. Oh! there is no indefectibility, and if the members of the true Church fall away, what shall be said of those who glory in the deceivableness of unrighteousness? Iniquity—being without filial relation to God, so without the love of the Father, the law of the Spirit of life, *the law of righteousness*—will abound, and the love of many will wax cold. The Apostle Paul warns the Thessalonians of the Lord's coming, that he will come as a thief in the night, when men are in a condition of darkness; for the world, with its refinements of pleasure, religion, and intellect, will, withal, be only in darkness—in iniquity, *ανομία*, without the law of righteousness. But there will be those who will be in the light, and of it, who will have on the breastplate of righteousness (Eph. vi. 14), which is the breastplate of faith and love (1 Thess. v. 8) for in Christ they put down all unrighteousness, and in the Spirit of the Son righteousness works according to its own law (Rom. viii. 2), and so are they of the day and not of the night, of light and not of darkness. Thus, then, the breastplate of righteousness and the breastplate of faith and love are identical—are one. It is the Spirit of

life in *Christ Jesus*, whose law is love. But when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? If he shall not, how shall he find love? Then, because of iniquity abounding, will the love of many wax cold, depart.

13. He, then, that possesses the helmet of salvation—holiness, in faith and love, and so continues in all patience unto the end, shall be saved. The Lord in this verse intimates the subtle devices of Satan in procrastination (chap. viii. 29). Hence, many ask, When will the Lord come? instead of fighting the great battle of life, even to the end. The truth possessed is an answer to all that is not of it. Therefore *the Gospel of the kingdom* must be preached, heralded forth in the whole inhabited—*οικουμένη*—world, as a witness to all nations; so that the Gospel, the truth according to the Word of God, and not according to the word of men, may be an answer to all men how near the kingdom is, for when this is done, the kingdom will be manifested, for the end is come, but the world will be desolate.

15. The truth is one, and is co-extensive with all nations; therefore is it to be preached, heralded forth in all its integrity and purity. And he who does this in all simplicity and truth in one place, does but the same thing as is done in another. Worldly distinctions, whether in respect to the preacher or to the hearers, must be utterly ignored, for there is an abomination that maketh desolate in all the *deceivableness* of unrighteousness. Therefore, when ye see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, *standing in the holy place* (whoso readeth, *let him understand*), then let them which be in Judæa flee into the mountains. Who shall see this but he who is one with the truth in Christ Jesus? What, then, is the abomination—*βδελυγμα*? The word itself powerfully expresses it. It is an offence, an ill savour that comes up before God; it is the flesh, and all that is of it. This abomination was in the holy place in the Lord's time. It was, according to Daniel the prophet, *at the end of the week*, in the conduct and condition of the ancient city, as the people there filled up the measure of their fathers' iniquity, continuing, despite the faithful witness in the teaching of Jesus, and the clear testimony of the truth itself, simply in the works of the flesh. (Is. i. 13; lviii. 2: and Rom. ii. 18—23.)

Daniel prayed, and Gabriel appeared to him to give him skill

and understanding. The building of Jerusalem witnessed to the covenant. Then, seventy weeks were determined. This number intensifies the idea of the covenant, as it expresses a full revelation of it. The coming forth of Messiah would be this, for he was given a covenant for the people, bringing in an everlasting righteousness. So, then, seven weeks, the sign of the covenant, then sixty and two weeks, signifying its meeting the necessities of *all men short of the glory of God*, according to its two principles in Christ Jesus. Then it was confirmed by one week—a *seven*. This may be of days, years, or tens of years. In the midst of this seven, the sacrifice and oblation would cease, and Messiah would be cut off, and an everlasting righteousness brought in. From his departure, then, out of the temple, to the consummation of the desolation, the week would be finished, and so the seventy weeks determined.

The abomination that maketh desolate, and drove the Redeemer from the temple, is, as we have seen, the flesh—the old Adam in the holy place—assuming a knowledge and zeal of God *after its own way*. It matters not what form the flesh may take, *it is* in the holy place. It was so when Jerusalem was destroyed: it will be so when the Lord shall come the second time unto salvation. The son of perdition, the colossal man, the Antichrist, must and will work until he be taken out of the way. He is now reaching his full development, and *we see him* in the holy place. (1 Thes. ii.) He modifies the covenant, a giant in intellect, enrobed in a sanctimonious demeanour, and walking after the flesh; but the Lord will come and destroy him with the Spirit of his mouth and the brightness of his coming.

If we go back to Isaiah, whose writings were evidently present to the mind of Jesus, we see what was this abomination. It was the carnal nature, as it is before God, instead of the ascending incense of the golden altar.

The brazen altar signified a death to sin, as the way into the holy place, which was Christ, and the golden altar then expressed the new life, and so a savour of the things that be of God, a sweet smelling odour unto him. But when the priests came into the holy place, having not the Spirit of Christ, their incense was no longer a sweet odour, but an abomination, *βδελυγμα*—a foul stench, and the holy place was polluted. (Is. i. 13.) In Christ

Jesus we are made kings and priests unto God, and so pillars in the house of our God, and we offer the true incense. The pollution of the house of God reached, so to speak, at different epochs, its climax, indicated by some unmistakeable sign. Their young men were given over to the sword, the vessels of the house were carried away to Babylon, and the house was burned (2 Chron. xxxvi.) To this Daniel refers, saying, From the time the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate, shall be 1290 days. This abomination in the Holy Land took place about 600 B.C., when the temple was destroyed. Then, about 700 A.D., when heresy after heresy had sprung up, and so there was the overspreading of abomination, God sent the Saracen as a desolating scourge, even as Babylon before, who went forth treading out all the forms of Christianity in Asia and in Europe—so much so, that the last embers were all but extinct, attesting the abomination in the Christian Church and so to the universal corruption. But God, in mercy, having taught how truly abomination maketh desolate, and desolating destruction, again manifested his mighty arm, and wrought deliverance as he strengthened the little band of noble hearts on the seventh day of their great struggle.

Daniel continues, saying, Blessed, then, is he that cometh to the close of 1335 days—who shall endure to the end. So, then, these 1335 days or years, calculated from the deliverance, wrought at the close of the 1290 years, will coincide with the end. In the words of the prophet Daniel, there is implied the again overspreading of abominations, making desolate at the end of the world. With Christ, signs are not without the things signified. Then if we perceive the reality, we shall understand the sign. When we see the abomination of desolation, we know that the end is fast approaching. Of this, the destruction of Jerusalem, the ruin of the temple, and the passing away of the Jewish polity, was the typical sign. The Lord had declared their house left unto the desolate; destruction follows, and one stone is not left standing upon another. However, after redemption, after the finished work of Christ, who was the fulfilment—the filling up of the *τυπος*—their law, God suffered them yet another forty years. Stephen predicts the end of this, as he presents a parallel, identifying the manners, in the wilderness, with the abomination that brought

the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians : O ye house of Israel, said God, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices forty years in the wilderness ? Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch and the star of your god Remphan, *types which ye made*, to worship them, and I will carry ye away beyond Babylon. This faithful martyr of Christ saw most truly the abomination of desolation *then* hastening on the destruction of the fore-doomed city.

And now, in the full revelation of the covenant, the world is redeemed, and a *redeemed* world is Christ, for all things are gathered into one, into Christ (Eph. i. 10)—*he is the holy place* ; for heaven and earth are one vast temple—heaven is God's throne, earth is his footstool, in Christ all things are under his feet, and his glory is over all his works. Then, says Paul, with his Master, *Let no man deceive you*, for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped ; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. It is Antichrist, the colossal man. He, as *one man*, is distinctly revealing himself. This appellation tells us distinctly where to look for him. He is in the holy place. The Church is the body of Christ, and consists only of those who *make effective* the universal truth—dead with Christ, dead by the body of Christ—who live Christ crucified ; for there is but one body, and it is Christ's. If the universe be as one vast temple, if God has gathered all things into Christ, and in him has reconciled heaven and earth, we can then understand how that all that is not of Christ is of the old Adam, who will, in the progress of modern science, in a sanctimonious demeanour and intellectual knowledge, develop himself, *supplant* Christ, *stand in the place of Christ*, and so stand in the holy place.

There are seasons calling for greater watchfulness, but the truth requires ever a perfect watchfulness. And as the workings of evil are still more subtle in the usages, habits, and refinements of modern society, there must be a yet more searching and unsparing visitation to unveil them.

16. It is a great mistake to restrict this solemn admonition of the Lord to the demolition of the temple, and the destruction of

Jerusalem ; for, speaking of Judæa, he goes beyond it. Moreover, his disciples were not bound by the visible ; and since the middle wall of partition was broken down, what he addressed to them in Judæa, he spake to all who were translated into his own kingdom. If his warning, his solemn admonition, had been limited to Jerusalem, though many did escape to Pella, we should not have had the solemn injunction, " Whoso readeth, let him understand." This warning the faithful will not fail to observe. It directs to the only place of safety ; while the abomination of desolation—the old Adam, with all his singular developments, will call forth the signal vengeance of Almighty God. We are, when we see this abomination standing in the holy place, the old Adam *in his full development* standing forth as Antichrist, to flee to the mountains. No halting, no looking behind. It is the mountains that bring peace—emblems of a Triune God. As it is said, They that trust in Jehovah shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever. And as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so is Jehovah round about his people from henceforth, even for ever. And it is to this kingdom, established in the tops of the mountains, that all nations, in the latter days, shall flow. To flee, then, to the mountains, is to realise Jehovah as our refuge and our fortress.

17, 18. These warnings taken literally would be simple enough, but they convey truth of an inward and spiritual application. Then let there be such a condition of soul that, when these terrible calamities are coming upon a doomed city, or upon a doomed world, you may not be entangled in the universal destruction, for he that has found God to be his refuge will be careful for nothing. One may be on the house-top, having wealth, and every earthly enjoyment, then if he possess the inestimable treasure of my name—crucified to all, let him not turn into the house. Or, as one may be toiling in the honest labour of daily toil, let him not turn back, but flee for his life, allowing no earthly thing whatever to entangle him here below.

19. But woe be to them that are with child, or give suck in those days ! Why this woe ? Can it be taken literally ? They who escape, and look not behind, are safe ; but there is a woe upon those whose condition renders escape impossible. Then what is this condition ? Simply, they who bring forth of the

flesh, who are living according to it, and who minister to it. In these, literally, most lawful pursuits, we are warned that there will be no excuse—whatever be our lot in life, or the time in which it is cast—allowed, or can be from the nature of things. We are not to live to the flesh, or make provision to fulfil its lusts.

20. And pray that your flight be not in the winter, nor on the Sabbath day. In winter nature ceases to give her warning. It is a period of darkness, of icy death. Put not off, then, your flight till it is too late. Not only will you, in the winter of life, be indisposed to flee to the mountains, but also the voice of nature will be hushed, and so fail to give her unmistakeable warning. Nor, to the Sabbath, when time will cease, and the everlasting rest will be entered upon. Then, when you see this abomination *in the holy place*, do not procrastinate your flight, but take it, and in taking it, forsake all.

21. For there will be a great tribulation, such as was not from the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall be. The judgment of God swept over Jerusalem, when it was destroyed by the armies of Babylon and of Rome. It swept over the inhabitable part of the globe by the Saracen hosts against the professed followers of God. Then, when it shall come in the last great tribulation, of which the former were but types—the words of the Lord are applicable both to the type and antitype—it will be after the second coming (verse 30). It will be the great judgment of God. The Lord has admonished us when we see the abomination that maketh desolate in the holy place—Antichrist—to flee to the mountains. He has warned us against deferring our flight to a time of darkness, inertia, indifference; or, to the Sabbath, which follows, when the door will be shut (xxv. 11—13), and there will be no escape.

22. What are the days that shall be shortened? They are the days of the approaching winter that will usher in the resurrection morn—the spring of a coming eternity. They are the days when the abomination that *maketh desolate* standeth *in the holy place*, and is worshipped. These days of iniquity will have such a power, such an influence to deceive, as never was before; for Antichrist will never appear to oppose Christ, but will take his place; but the elect are they who have learned Christ, and in him know the Father. For their sake these days shall be shortened.

These words of the Lord are applicable to the visible—the temple and Jerusalem, as also to the Jewish nation; but evidently they cannot be restricted to them. The grand idea in the mind of Jesus is the end, yet his words are adopted as a warning to Jerusalem in her typical character.

23. The Lord now more clearly explains how this working evil in all the deceivableness of unrighteousness will destroy the flesh, and even the elect if it be possible—them who, in Christ, have crucified the old Adam, the flesh.

24. When we carefully consider the words of Jesus, we understand how that the elect are they who know the Christ, the Lord, in a true inward condition of heart and soul, as born of water and of the Spirit, and know that they are not of this world, but *are* translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, we understand how that Antichrist, the son of perdition, the counterfeit of all that is true, will be in the flesh, outward and visible, for the cross will be ignored. And wherever this is the case whatever be the form, it will be an Antichrist. Then if we shall say, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. He is *nowhere visible* in any form. False Christs and false prophets shall arise and give great signs and wonders; and so, if it were possible, deceive the very elect. Many, *in that day*—in the Sabbath when the door is closed—will cry, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? have we not cast out devils in thy name?—and by these two things they would recognise the name of Lord and Christ, or Jesus Christ—and done many wonderful works in thy name? but, alas! they will then be undeceived, and learn that they have been the workers of iniquity, *anomia*, which will then abound.

25. Behold, I have told you before: as if he would deeply impress them with this solemn warning.

26. Many will teach that Christ is found in the desert; go not forth—(this desert or wilderness is a separation from our fellow men, a separation from the world in a form of religious asceticism—and many, that he is in the secret chambers—*καπηλια*, from *τεμνω* to cut off—as if the opposite of the former, which is, leave the world in a religious form, habit, or life; while this would be to enter into the duties and discharge the amenities of social life. A religious asceticism or deprivation of those things which

minister to the flesh; or, on the other hand, a discharging of the amenities of life, is put for Christ. We are then not to go out to the one, nor believe the other. To know Christ must be in the depths of our inner being, in the putting off of the old Adam, who may come forth as the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. No outward religious form, or intellectual development in which we may take our place in modern society, and so discharge the amenities of life, is Christ, or can be substituted for him. If we are the elect, we put off the flesh *altogether*, and so purify ourselves as he is pure, then when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

27. False prophets—false teachers will not show the necessity of a preparedness for the coming Lord. To possess Christ is to endure patiently unto the end, striving against all the evil influences of a world lying in the wicked one: then shall we know of the Lord's coming. (Ps. xlv. 11.) From the very nature of things there is no greater knowledge of it than a meetness for it. He will come, and he will be seen, not by our going out of the world into the wilderness, nor in withdrawing oneself into the retirement of domestic life, but as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. He will come not only as the Christ, but as the Son of man, in all the fulness of the blessings of his covenant; for herein he signifies the nature of his coming. Electricity is everywhere diffused, and occasionally reveals itself in lightning. This subtle fluid is a fitting sign of the kingdom, which will yet reveal itself in the coming of the Son of man, as the lightning coming out of the east shineth unto the west. They, then, who have escaped to the mountains, and to the house of the Lord established on the top of them, *are in* the kingdom; but his coming to Antichrist will be like the eagle's who hasteth to eat. (Hab. i. 8.) The eagle dwelleth and abideth on the rock, and the strong place. From thence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off. Her young ones also suck up blood; and where the slain are, there is she. (Job. xxxix. 28—30.)

It was predicted that, with respect to the first temple, the Chaldæan should be raised up, a bitter and hasty nation, which should march through the breadth of the land, to *possess the dwelling-places* that are not theirs. And, with respect to the

second temple, the prediction of Moses (Deut. xxviii. 45—58) was, even in all its minute details, fulfilled. And at the close of the first period of the prophecy of Daniel, the Saracen hosts, a fierce and cruel foe, went forth with an unsparing hand, spreading desolation everywhere. But who shall abide at the close of the second period, when God will arise to shake terribly the earth? —Appendix (E).

The Lord has here brought us to the consummation of all things, when time shall be no more, and when all that offendeth and maketh a lie shall be put away, and which the eagles of heaven will remove. This verse takes us back to the destruction of Jerusalem, as the type of the end of all things.

29. Then immediately after the tribulation of those days—not the destruction of Jerusalem, much less after the tribulation that will follow the Lord's coming—the reality, of which the former was the sign—but after the tribulation of the ancient people of God, who are still fulfilling a part in the economy of grace, who are now suffering the severity of God, for in a large house there are vessels of honour and of dishonour, and they were vessels of honour when brought out of Egypt into the land of promise; but now of dishonour, being scattered and trodden under foot—shall signs take place. The iniquity of the Jews was filled up, and the destruction of the nation took place. And now the iniquity of the Gentiles is fully setting in, which will result in the final judgment of all men. Then, immediately after this tribulation of the Jews, when it shall pass away, signs will appear; they will attest the iniquity of the Gentiles—the abomination of desolation in the holy place. The sun will be darkened, the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. The luminaries of heaven were for signs. (Gen. i. 14.) The sun is the Light of the World—the Sun of Righteousness. It is Christ the Son of God from whose face the light of the glory of God now shines unto us. The moon is the faithful witness in heaven; she receives the light of the sun, and gives it forth to a benighted world. Such is the bride, the true invisible Church of Christ; while the stars are individual believers.

In many parts of Scripture the *abnormal* condition of these signs accompany the day of the Lord, terrible with wrath and

fiery indignation. All these terrible visitations point yet forward to the coming of the Lord. The strong language denouncing the destruction of Egypt, Babylon, and Jerusalem, is not without reference to the destruction of the world, and it a sinful world. Egypt is the world *lying in the wicked one*, from which we are redeemed, whose coming judgment we read in Ezek. xxxii. 1—10. Babylon is the *great whore*, to whom we return when we forsake our God, who has redeemed us. Also in this character is the coming judgment of the world. (Is. xiii. 9—16.) And Jerusalem, the land in which judgment should run down like water, and righteousness as a mighty stream, as the bride of the Son of God, has dishonoured him, and so brings down upon herself desolation and destruction. (Amos v. 20, &c.: Joel iii. 12, 15.) Thus, in these three cities, may the world read its doom and destruction, and with the accompanying signs, the darkened luminaries, read, not only how near it is, but also the provoking cause.

The sun is obscured; this is not Satan, the god of this world, blinding the eyes of them that believe not, but the sun itself is obscured, darkened. A voluntary humility, spiritual pride, overweening conceit, *all that is not Christ crucified lifted up in the heart*, darkens, obscures the Sun of Righteousness. Wherefore the Church cannot give her light. The invisible Church is made visible by her *three* orders of ministers, and her *two* sacraments, so attesting the covenant, and its two eternal principles. But while she possesses these, and despite of them, it is predicted of her, She shall not give her light. Then where is she? The English Church is torn in pieces. Then amid the contentions, jealousies, heartburnings, and ignorance of the one Christ, where, amid the churches, the parties, and sects that divide Christendom, is the faithful witness? And the stars shall fall from heaven. They are the sons of God. (Job xxxviii. 7: 2 Peter i. 19: Rev. ii. 28.) Who is he that overcometh, but he that is in Christ; and he that is in Christ is a son of God. But then iniquity will abound, the filial relation will be snapped asunder, and so they will fall from heaven. We are sons of God, by the grace of the Father. But where is his love? when it is apparent to every one that the only distinguishing feature of men is a refinement of selfishness.

And the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. The powers that be are ordained of God. They are the relationships of life.

Each one, then, who fulfils the relationship in which the providence of God has placed him, possesses a power. It springs from the covenant, for it is the power of the *heavens*. It requires as much, or more, power to take the inferior as the superior; and fulfilled, the power is revealed. But if men will not merge themselves in the relation, the power is shaken. Speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee (Job xii. 8), for in it we read in no dark and uncertain characters, the things of God. Yet how much more can he who understands the substance read the shadows; but of these we may say, the social sores of even this great metropolis are filling all thoughtful men with deep concern.

The relation of monarch and subject, attesting the true King, is loosened. Restless spirits are ever striving, with a false idea of liberty, to ignore monarchy altogether, so that of State and Church—we adhere to this order, since the temporal power is derived from the true King, and is for the repression of evil, and the punishment of evil-doers, that the full blessing of the Church may abound—is shaken. Every true believer is a king and priest unto God, so, possessing in himself the eternal principles of the covenant, he understands the relation of the outward, the shadow, and according to this order.

So of primogeniture. It is a power of the heavens. Jesus is the first-born among many brethren, and the heir of all things. He has the pre-eminence. It is in his primogeniture that he maintains the honour and dignity of the whole family of God; for as a Son he is *over* his own house, whose house are we if we hold fast our confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope, firm unto the end. (Heb. iv. 6.)

Another very important relation is shaken to its very foundation. It is of universal recognition, and the rupture of it must entail the most lamentable results: it is the relation of man and woman. Man is the glory of God; woman the glory of the man. (1 Cor. xi. 7.) The former represents the emanation of the divine, the latter of the human—both of which are possessed, in creation and redemption, by every individual. So there is in every man the divine and the human—the latter to be *subject to the former in all things*. Where, then, soever the truth of God is possessed in all its reality, whether in man or woman, the relationships of life will not be irksome, but the joy of the heart.

Then, for the truth's sake, let the woman maintain her place, and in all things reverence her husband. And let her remember that she has no choice, for her position is not one of isolation, as she was created for the man, and not the man for the woman. And so it may be said of the lower nature, in respect of the true personality of every one. It was created for the soul. But what is to be said of those who compete for woman for what she calls equal rights? Her true power will be only in her keeping the place which Providence has assigned her. But, alas! we are told the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

And in respect of the relation of master and man, as in those of commercial life, "If we turn for one moment to the higher classes, and see the humiliating depreciation of commercial integrity and honour, during the last few years, anxious doubt and general distrust take the place of a cheerful enthusiasm of former years. And, in the lower strata of society, the revelations of Trades Unions cannot be overdrawn. They show a disorganisation of industrial elements amounting to internecine warfare. Where co-operation is most needful, and would seem to be most natural, there is a persistent and suicidal effort on the part of skilled labourers to render labour not as remunerative, but as unproductive, as they can, and to clog and paralyze it by artificial fetters."

Yet there is one sign which, as by a merciful interposition, still lingers: it is that which, when all others cease, will attest the Father. Thoughtful men see this. On one occasion, addressing an intelligent labourer respecting the altered relation of man and master, he remarked, saying, "All relations are gone but one, and that is going:" it is that of son to a father, and a father to a son. In this relation all others centre. Then, if they are gone, and this is going, the curse must come as it has never yet come. (Mal. iv. 6.) The outrageous egotism, the utter selfishness, the downright folly of men, act in one fearful conspiracy to destroy the relationships of life; and, as that mighty wave bore before it devastation and death on the little isle of the western sea, so now the mass of humanity is surging up in one vast colossal form to the fulfilment of this curse.—Appendix (F).

30. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in the heavens. What sign is this? What, when all the signs of time,

both in earth and in heaven, have ceased—what, amid the universal darkness, but the truth itself ushering in the glory of a never-ending day? It will be the coming, not of a morning star, but it will be the unapproachable light of the glory itself. It will be the manifestation of the kingdom, when the tribes of the earth will mourn, being awakened to their true condition and unfitness for the heavenly inheritance. And then will they see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and much glory. He will come as the Christ, in all the power of Jehovah; and as the Son, in the full blessings of the Father, in all the glory of his inheritance. In this power, and in this glory, he will, according to the covenant in the eternal purpose of a Triune God, put away all that is not of it, and bestow all that is. Such will be the grace that will come unto us at his appearing. (1 Peter i. 13).

31. And he will send forth his angels with the great sound of a trumpet, to gather his elect from the *four* winds—that is, out of every kindred, nation, people, and tongue—from one part of heaven unto another—those who are already partakers of his power and of his glory—who, as the elect, possess Christ the Son of God, and who are thus ready, meet for him, else they will awake to everlasting shame and contempt.

32. The abomination of desolation standing in the holy place; the signs—in the obscuration of the sun, the moon not giving her light, the stars falling from heaven, and the powers of the heavens being shaken; the Gospel being preached to all nations, that they might come up to the tops of the mountains; and the cessation of tribulation—the oppression of the world, the greater Egypt, which the Jewish nation has suffered—are now preparing the way for the sign of the Son of man in heaven. Wherefore the Lord, now, by a very striking sign, which carries us back through the whole Word of God, and with a most solemn warning, says, Learn the parable from the fig-tree. What parable—what fig-tree? There is here no reference to the cursed fig-tree, which was the old Adam nature in the garb of religion, and which has no power to produce fruit. But it is the Jewish nation, tender and breaking forth as if with fresh life. Its oppression is removed, and it is no longer trodden under foot, but breaking forth, enjoying *native rights and privileges*. In every nation it is so. But here

the Jew has every disability removed. So, then, in every nation the fig-tree *is tender*, and putting forth its leaves. Then, as this naturally indicates the approach of summer, so, in its parabolic teaching, it indicates how all these things are nigh at hand, even at our very doors. But despite of all, even as the dying man, the world will not know how near its end is. And the gracious Redeemer, seeing this, makes this solemn and emphatic declaration, Verily, I say to you, That this generation shall not pass away until all these things be. The heaven and the earth shall pass away. The material temple has passed away. The Jewish nation, as a temple, has passed away. And now, heaven and earth, as one vast temple, shall pass away. But these words of mine cannot pass away. But of that same day, and of that hour, knoweth no man, neither the angels of the heavens, but my Father only. The Father knows it, as he will determine it. And it may be in his long-suffering, forbearing mercy, that man, filling up the measure of his iniquity, will hasten on the crisis. And the Lord explains the nature of the generation—the man of sin; for as they were, in the days of the flood, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered into the ark, and they knew not until the flood came and took them all away, so shall it be at the appearing of the Son of man. This generation will be the abomination of desolation—it will not pass away, but fully develop itself, standing in the holy place, as never has been in the past history of the world, until he who will come shall come and take it out of the way.

40. Then when he shall come, his elect—who are such, not by an arbitrary choice, but as obeying the truth—will follow their ordinary avocation. We know the sign of the last days, the necessity of fleeing to the mountains; and, notwithstanding they all ate and drank in the time of Noah, so were simply living to the flesh—the abomination of desolation—and were overtaken by the flood, his elect will labour in the field, will grind at the mill, they will do those things that they may eat, but they are the elect, and, like Noah, they possess the eternal truths of the covenant; they are perfect in their generations, for they flee to the mountains and watch, and so escape, while others are left.

42. Watch, therefore. The Lord, having answered the questions put to him by his disciples, and forewarned them and all

men by the signs given of the universal depravity in the last day commands them to watch, intimating thereby not only the possibility, but the probability, without such watching, of their falling away and being the one left. So, the first may be last. The law of the flesh is ever striving against the law of the Spirit. But we must watch. And we do this only in that condition which is in all wisdom and spiritual understanding to the acknowledging of the mystery of Christ, and the full assurance in the knowledge of the Father. Then that day will not overtake us, for we shall watch as a bride prepared and ready for the bridegroom, for we know not at what hour our Lord cometh.

43. The Lord is coming as a bridegroom, or as a thief—as the former, to those only who, *out of the house* of the Lord, can say Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; as the latter, to those who are one with the abomination of desolation, and whose house is left desolate. The disciples understood not the Lord. He showed them the unspeakable folly of being in the condition that cannot watch. The master of the house, if he knew at what hour the thief would come, would watch, and not suffer his house to be broken into. Every one, then, must watch that the Lord may not come as a thief. He addresses all, and especially them who are in his stead, as the true Master of the house. (Heb. iii. 5, 6.) It is to watch for souls, and to watch for ourselves, to watch according to God—according to the truth, to be perfect in Christ Jesus. To watch thus prepared for him, to receive him as a bridegroom, when we shall require none of those very mischievous discourses about *the day of death* being wisely unrevealed; and which also has nothing to do with what is called the sovereignty of God. Christianity is not a preparation for death, but for life—not to receive Christ as a thief, but as one coming in the name of the Lord.

45. Who, then, is that faithful servant, prudent, whom the Lord shall establish over his household, to give them meat in season? Here is a relationship which has power. It is that of master and servant. It may be objected that the relationships which we have stated as powers of heaven, are only powers of earth. It has been so, and when asked, Which? the reply given has been, that of master and servant. However, we need not show that this is a power of heaven; and when it is shaken

who will there be to teach and enforce the last power of filial love to God? And there is yet another relation, that of the servant of Christ to his fellow-man. His Lord, as the Master of the house, has established him, to give the household their meat in season.

He is *faithful*, because he is one with Christ. He has the mind which was in Christ Jesus, in a perfect renunciation of self, that the will of God alone may be done. He is *prudent*, in adapting all means, that he may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. It is, indeed, an honourable distinction to be over the true people of God. And who is this, but he whom his Lord has established, to give them meat in season. Men may give others authority, but what is this, if that of God be lacking, even the true qualification, which is not outward in the flesh. Men seat themselves in the place of Christ, even as the scribes and Pharisees did in the seat of Moses. Awful, indeed, is the responsibility of those who *legally* fix men to feed the flock of God. The Lord, in his prescience, sees men seating themselves, and asks, Who is he *whom he* has so placed, that, when he shall come, he will find giving to his people their meat in season? A clerical journal writes—"The blight and curse of the religious life, in the metropolis, is the seeking after popular preaching on the part of the people, and the disposition to foster this disease of itching ears by their religious teachers."

These and such like solemn warnings the Lord well knew would be required, more particularly as the day of his advent drew nigh. Whatever, then, may be the distinguishing signs of parties or of sects, all must be well aware that Christianity is not doctrine, but life. And he who possesses this will find the conflict not with his fellow-men, not with flesh and blood, and so outward, but inward, with principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places. Sin comes in all the deceivableness of unrighteousness. Blessed, then, is he who, in the midst of this universal darkness, sits in light, waiting the advent of his Lord, giving to the household their meat in season, which is not merely the truth of God, but also a clear apprehension of the abomination of desolation, and all the subtle devices of Satan, whereby he lies in wait to deceive.

47. Verily, says his Lord, I will establish him over all my possessions. Glorious, then, is the dignity and the reward awaiting those who seek not the things of a world of fact and science, but those of an eternal inheritance; for to be established hereafter over all, is to be fellow-heir with Jesus, who, from the beginning, was heir of all things. (Heb. i. 2: Rom. viii. 17.)

48. But there is an evil servant who has taken upon himself the office, who has not entered by the door, who in his heart *practically* denies the Lord's coming. For if, in the possession of the truth, he watches, then, not to watch, is to be destitute of this. He may indicate the signs of his Master's coming, but lacking the condition of preparedness, he in his heart denies it.

49. He begins to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken. Such are the distinguishing features of the evil servant—not that he falls into gross sins, but that he is simply in the flesh, in the spirit that is in the world. He smites his fellow-servants; he lords over God's heritage; he condemns in others what he will not see in himself, and, while condemning them, he accommodates himself to them, because he is in the flesh. He is not faithful to God and the trust reposed in him; but with all his distinguishing gifts he is ministering only to the colossal man—Antichrist—the abomination of desolation. And his Lord will come in a day that he thinketh not, and in an hour that he knoweth not. How emphatic is this negative! yet most comforting to the faithful servant of Christ, for, while conscious of evil and its mighty power fully developing itself in the depraved nature of man, conscious of it in himself and in others, he prays, and prays without ceasing; he not only truly watches, but gives unmistakeable evidence that he is not ignorant of the Lord's coming, but desires a condition meet to receive him; while the unfaithful one, self-satisfied, and seeking to please men, will be cut asunder. Death will overtake him in judgment, and his inheritance, instead of being the righteousness of God, will be the portion of hypocrites. And there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Deep sorrow and bitter remorse, commingled, will be drunk to their very dregs.

Thus the Lord taught his disciples, whatever they may have thought respecting the hypocrites on whom he had just pronounced fearful woes, that it was for them and others, with still

greater privileges, to take good heed that their portion was not with them, for there will be then no pitying, no sparing, but judgment in righteousness, when they will be cut asunder instead of being united to the bridegroom, and their portion will be weeping and gnashing of teeth instead of rejoicing, and partaking of the marriage feast, to which all are invited.

CHAPTER XXV.

1 THEN shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which
2 took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of
3 them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their
4 lamps, and took no oil with them : but the wise took oil in their vessels
5 with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and
6 slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom
7 cometh ; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed
8 their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil ; for
9 our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, *Not so ;* lest there
be not enough for us and you : but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy
10 for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came ; and
they that were ready went in with him to the marriage : and the door was
11 shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to
12 us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.
13 Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the
Son of man cometh.

14 For *the kingdom of heaven is* as a man travelling into a far country, who
15 called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one
he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one ; to every man
16 according to his several ability ; and straightway took his journey. Then
he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and
17 made *them* other five talents. And likewise he that *had received* two, he
18 also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in
19 the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those
20 servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received
five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou de-
liveredst unto me five talents : behold, I have gained beside them five
21 talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, *thou* good and faithful
servant : thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler
22 over many things : enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had
received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two
23 talents : behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord
said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant : thou hast been
faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things : enter
24 thou into the joy of thy lord. Then he which had received the one talent

came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where
25 thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: and I was
afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, *there* thou hast *that is*
26 thine. His lord answered and said unto him, *Thou* wicked and slothful
servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I
27 have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the
exchangers, and *then* at my coming I should have received mine own with
28 usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give *it* unto him which hath
29 ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have
abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that
30 which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness:
there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels
32 with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him
shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another,
33 as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep
on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed
of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation
35 of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty,
36 and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye
clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came
37 unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we
38 thee an hungered, and fed *thee*? or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink? When
39 saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*? Or
40 when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King
shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye
have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it*
unto me.

41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye
42 cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was
an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no
43 drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me
44 not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also
answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a
stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?
45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye
46 did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me. And these
shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life
eternal.

1. THE parables in this chapter mutually explain each other. Yet a comparison is often drawn between this and the following, as if this expressed a need of inward faith, and that of outward

works. What is an inward faith? Is it the assent of the mind to certain doctrines instead of a condition of soul in Christ Jesus? The faith of the present day is the mere belief of the intellect only which is bestowed upon all; it is the mere assent of the mind to a universal truth; a faith that does not go one jot beyond what the Bible and all nature reveal; and therefore if it is dead, it is nothing. Works become everything—not indeed the works of the flesh, for the *very first* step into the kingdom cuts at the root of all that is not of the Father. Throughout the whole teaching of the Lord works are implied. He lays down the indispensable necessity of bearing his cross, of possessing the Holy Spirit, and in this Spirit doing the will of the Father. Works and love are thus identical, since they are the outcoming of the never-failing principle of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

It is remarkable to what shifts expositors resort to explain the details of this parable, because they fail to take the ground which the Lord uttered it. It is an exposition of what goes before, and shows how mischievous must be the incorrect interpretations of isolated passages of Scripture. They who undertake to interpret the Word of God should closely, consecutively, and clearly follow the mind of the writer.

Then, the kingdom of the *heavens* shall be likened to ten virgins. In Matt. xxii. 2, the kingdom of the heavens is likened to ten virgins. So long as time lasts it is likened, for all things are *now* ready. But when the end comes, when all the signs of its coming appear, then the kingdom of the heavens will be likened to ten virgins. It will be the time of the bridegroom coming in the name of the Lord.

The virgins are the servants of the Master of the house. The Lord calls them servants, faithful or evil. As virgins they prepare the bride for the bridegroom, to whom the bride shall be brought in raiment of needlework—the virgins, her companions that follow her, shall be brought unto thee. (Ps. xlv. 14.) The virgins they represent *the ministers* of God, who in their vocation are separated as pure and holy vessels to serve the sanctuary. So, then, the appellation would apply to the disciples, and to the end of time, who should come in Christ's stead as ambassadors of God. The number ten, as the sign of totality, comprehends all without any exception. The two fives into which the

are divided, for they form but two classes—the faithful and prudent, and the evil and foolish—are very important as they stand first in the parable which follows; for these two parables bring out distinctly and prominently the two great truths of the covenant—the Lord and Christ respectively—which the Lord has in these chapters been teaching, and *to which every holy temple bears witness*. The scribes and the Pharisees sat in Moses' seat. "Moses" is often used for the law—the *five* books. And the Lord telling his disciples to do as they say, was simply with regard to the Word of God. Five is here, as in many places, put for the *written* covenant, the Word of God in its integrity. This Word the ministers of God minister. But in respect of it, some are faithful and prudent, and the rest are evil and foolish. The former, like the good and faithful servant, are giving to the household their meat *in season* at the time of their Lord's advent. The latter, like the evil servant, say in *their heart*, My Lord delayeth his coming, and are identified with the world, intoxicated with its own conceits. And Peter afterwards, as a faithful servant, having ministered faith—the divine nature, righteousness—prudently exhorts to the possession of all things that pertain to life and godliness; and that, in doing these things, *so making your calling and election sure*, an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our LORD and Saviour Jesus Christ. (2 Pet. i. 11.)

They all had lamps. As five, be they prudent or foolish, they would have. Thy Word, says the Psalmist, is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. (Ps. cxix. 105.) The whole of the Psalm shows this. The foolish took their lamps, but took no oil with them. Oil is the symbol of the Spirit of God, the Spirit of the Lord. (Heb. i. 9: Matt. vi. 17, 18: 1 Cor. xii. 3.) No man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. They knew not Christ. How, then, shall they minister the wedding garment—a preparedness for the marriage feast, the full blessing of the divine nature? They take their lamps that they may give light even amid the universal darkness. Being virgins, they take the office of ministers; but are they ministers? Do they minister the Word? They have a calling which *is not of the world*, and they may say much that is excellent, being taught out of the Word, but they have no oil with them; they lack the Spirit of

Christ, the true anointing from above. The prudent virgins took oil in their *vessels*, that is in Christ, with their lamps. They had oil in *themselves*, a treasure in Christ. It is the qualification, a knowledge of their Lord, and guided by his Spirit they would minister the Word in season, in wisdom and spiritual understanding. In this parable the Lord assumes the indelibility of orders, that they who are ordained to preach the Gospel continue to the end. If this be true of the foolish, who are destitute of a proper qualification, how much more so is it of the prudent virgins. And here there is no necessity for him, who finding himself in this office without a qualification, to turn back but rather to possess the talents which the office demands, and so, magnifying it, continue till the Lord comes.

5. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept (chap. xxiv. 48: 1 Thess. v. 6. 7). Such will be the condition of the world at the *bridegroom's* coming—in darkness without Christ, without the wedding garment, and then drunken, as without the Spirit of God, but filled with the spirit which is of the world. In the days of Noah the old Adam was drunken, an expressive image of that nature, developed according to the spirit of the world. (1 Thess. v. 8—7.) Nevertheless they who are Christ Jesus, who have put off the old man and put on the new, will require the same exhortation as the Hebrews who were in danger of lapsing, not only from the flesh lusting against the Spirit, but also from the persecutions of false brethren, to have patience, endurance, that after having done the will of God they might receive the promise; for yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the righteous shall be saved by faith, he will possess the substance—Christ Jesus—and demonstrate him in life; but if he let down the sail—*ἰπαστεῖλαι* (Heb. x. 36, 38)—if he do not keep his vessel bravely before the wind, “my soul shall have no pleasure in him.” Of this patience the eleventh chapter is full of examples, not only in a man struggling within, putting away sin and every weight, but also suffering the tribulations of a perfect providence without.

They all slumbered and slept. The whole parable, in setting forth corresponding spiritual truths, does not teach that they were all alike. It would be, then, that they all failed to wait, but that some slumbered and some slept; or, rather, and

signifies the same thing, all slumbered, but some slept. So they, who only slumbered, did not sleep; while they who slept, also slumbered. However, in the most forcible manner, the Lord pictures the condition of the world and its pernicious influence upon both the prudent and the foolish at his coming. Notwithstanding its very cruel boast of progress and enlightenment, it will be in midnight darkness. Let us not, then, be misled by the bald and literal interpretation of the Lord's words. He would have all watch. And who will do this but he who has learned Christ, and in him awaits the coming of his Lord. And who is he that will learn Christ, but he who has a deep sense of sin in his own heart, in the old Adam, and prays continually to be delivered from this his adversary, and who runs the *agony*, the mighty struggle, though he has to strive against sin, resisting unto blood. (Heb. xii. 4.)

They all slumbered and slept. The Psalmist writes (Ps. cxxi. 3): Jehovah that watcheth thee shall not slumber. Here slumber is opposed to watching. Then, at the bridegroom's coming, all will be under the benighted influence of the world. It will not, then, openly persecute, for Antichrist will take the place of Christ—*αντι*, as in chapter ii. 22, "in the room of." Of the prudent, it may be said, they are here warned against the condition of the world, and are exhorted not to slumber, not to be influenced by it; while to sleep is to be in a state of death, death in sin, death towards God. So Paul says, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise *from the dead*, and Christ shall give thee light.

In this midnight darkness, the sun is obscured, the moon is not giving her light, the stars from heaven are falling, and the powers of the heavens are shaken. In one word, iniquity—the very opposite of righteousness—is abounding. (Heb. i. 9.) The cry, with the sound of a trumpet, will then go forth, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh." Then will the prudent ones at once throw off the stupifying effects of the protracted and thick darkness, and their lamps will, as with fresh oil, revive and burn brightly. They must watch, else they slumber, and if they slumber, they may fall asleep. It is, indeed, a telling picture of the ministers of the latter days. The prudent take oil, knowing that they have to await and watch for their coming Lord; and, to keep their lamps burning and ready, they must not sleep,

but they cannot help nodding. The foolish are without oil, and they are asleep—they are without the Spirit, being without Christ. The command to all is, "Go ye out to meet him." Every minister of Christ will be thus commanded, that he may receive the recompense of the reward. Then, blessed is he that has been faithful, for an abundant entrance—the very opposite of a closed door—will then be vouchsafed him into the *everlasting* kingdom.

7. All arose, and trimmed their lamps. It is a preparation, a putting of them in a proper condition—hence the removal of all that would *dim the light*, of all that is of the world, obscuring the Sun of righteousness. The removal of this, and the supply of the oil, is the only and true condition. So, in Christ Jesus we are crucified to the world, and we are anointed with the Holy Spirit of God. But the foolish will then arise, and, to the utter amazement, be aware of their true condition only when too late, "for they will arise to shame and everlasting contempt. They know not the true Christ, they possess not *the one talent* they have served the world, and they have served it in its religious and sanctimonious form—they have not lifted up the cross of Christ, by whom alone the world is crucified to us, and we to the world. Then, when all that is of the world, when all that is of Antichrist, shall be put away, at the coming of the Lord, will the foolish awake to the sense of their true condition—being without oil. For, although they may teach a humility, self-denial, and looking for the coming of the Lord, yet are they strangers to that humility which is effected only by the mighty hand of God—to that self-denial which consists, not in the mere leaving off of old habits or the privation of earthly things, but which is a perfect self-denial in the putting off of the old Adam altogether in Christ, and that looking for Christ, for the glory which is to be revealed, for which we can well suffer the loss of all things. Then, being strangers to Christ crucified, and *without oil*, have they not been ministering to that spirit of Antichrist, helping to sustain the abomination of desolation in the holy place?

8. And the foolish said unto the prudent, Give us of your oil for our lamps are being spent. Does not this request express their folly? They are awakened to the maddening truth that they are destitute of the true anointing. In their distress an

despair they now turn to their fellow-creatures, as if they now possessed any ministerial power to meet their necessities. These unfaithful servants would never have thought, till then, of turning to their fellows, for that which they knew was to be had in the indwelling possession of God himself. They may, indeed, have been well satisfied with their lamps, which may have for a time exhibited a great light, have caused a great sensation, been most acceptable and popular, but they are going out. When the veil of self-deception shall be removed, the counsels of the heart will be made manifest, and every man then will reap the fruit of his own doing.

9. The prudent know the truth, how that no man will be able to shelter himself under another. In the "troubled theology" of the day, "of an age sick with doubt and craving for assurance," all men are not right, and though the blind may lead the blind, every man will bear his own sin. It is within the power of every man to put aside his prejudices, his predilections, his party, his life-long habits and forgone conclusions—yea, in perfect self-negation, so to be true to himself and to God, honestly, and in all sincerity, to learn from the Word of God the truth; for the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. Therefore must every one, for himself, work out his own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in him, both to will and to do of his good pleasure. These faithful ones, therefore, warn every man, and teach every man, *in all wisdom*, that they may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Then, what should be their reply to the request made? What, but that which they have always taught—that is, to realise, to make effective the grace of God already bestowed. Then, what is their advice? "Ask not of us, but rather go to them who sell, and buy for yourselves." This will be the awful revelation at last to those who procrastinate. They have lost the opportunity. Why have they? Why do they procrastinate? They do not count the cost. They would have the two worlds—they would have God and mammon. In all love they are told to do what Jesus told the man rich in this world's things to do, to sell all that he may buy of God. The only way to purchase a heavenly inheritance is to part with, in Christ, all things. If, then, they would purchase the oil of the kingdom, the earnest of a blessed inheritance, they

can do so only by winning Christ, being crucified to the world and the world to them. This is the wedding garment, to meet us for the heavenly banquet, and so to have an abundant entrance into the kingdom. Thus the prudent taught, from deep experience of their own hearts. And the foolish express theirs. But the opportunity is past. Time is no longer. They have despised the love of an everlasting Father. And if this failed to draw them, fear will never do the work. Wicked servants beat their fellow-servants, they work upon their fears instead of setting forth the unchanging and never-failing love of God. Then, they will not obey the Word of God—Moses and the prophets—neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. Of whom, then, are they to buy? To buy of them to sell—of the covenant Triune God, whom we approach in the holiest of all, only through the veil—even Christ.

10. And as they were going, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. The day of grace was past, and those failing to watch, procrastinating all for which only it is worth while to live, are shut out from all the blessings of a coming future. Thus, one is taken and the other left. And these afterwards came, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. They cry, We have prophesied in thy name, cast out devils in thy name, and done many wonderful works in thy name; but he will simply answer, I know you not. If Christ be in us, and he knows us, it is because we strive against sin, so realise, so make effective his indwelling. Else, our lamps may have given great light in this age, when old Adam is fully developed in all the refinements of social, religious, and mental life; we may have preached with power, moved many social ills, and helped forward the intellect of man and done much through the accidents of life, and yet be only workers of iniquity—*avopia*. For let us not be deceived, the counterfeit of the last days will have a remarkable resemblance to the original. Let every man, then, be true to himself, and follow the teaching of the Lord Jesus, that in the last and final crisis, now fast coming on, he may not hear the words of a loving Lord, "Verily, I say unto you, I know you not."

13. Seeing, then, the end and the awful undoing of them who are destitute of the grace of God, the Lord says to his

ciples, Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. He has shown, from the nature of things, the necessity of watching for the coming of the bridegroom, which can be only in a preparedness for him—that is, in the Christ and in the Holy Spirit. If, then, we are not now so watching, we have no possible ground for arguing, or expecting, that we shall be ready or prepared hereafter. The parable following shows how it is so. Further, it is a complete answer to the question, Why they, going to buy the oil, did not obtain it?

The Lord has still before him the end of all things—his second advent to judge the world. The bride will meet him, and those left will be banished into outer darkness. They will be those of whom he will say, I know you not, Depart from me. They will depart like the one at the marriage feast, having not on the wedding garment. The parable of the virgins is concerned with all who shall come in his stead as ministers of his Word; but this of the talents with the world at large.

The Lord urges upon his disciples, not only as apostles sent forth to teach all nations, but also as the twelve, so representing all men, To watch; because he is as a man travelling into a far country, who has called his *own* servants, and delivered to them his goods.

He came down from heaven, from the holy city, to the accursed one, and before he returns he calls his own servants; having redeemed the world, cast out the prince of it, and restored all things, none can say he is not his; for being bought with a price, being slaves to sin and redeemed, we are to glorify God with our bodies and our spirits, *which are his*. In our bodies we are with Christ dead to sin, and in our spirits we possess the righteousness of the Son. (Rom. viii. 10.) Having then redeemed the world, all are his, and to all he has given his goods. To one, he gave five talents; to another, two; to another, one. The five include the two, which include the one. So then he, who has the five, has the two; and he, who has the two, has the one; for the one is given to every one to trade withal. Thus, to each man is given according to his power. So, then, he who makes effective the one talent will have the two, and possessing the two he may have, he may be called to possess, the five. He possessing five, then, is “a prophet,” a minister of the Word of God—not of the *word of*

men, but of the Word of God. He, possessing two, is "a right man;" he possesses the two great truths of the covenant, Christ crucified and the Spirit. And he who has one, and makes it effective, is simply "a disciple." He carries the cross of Christ.

He, then, that has the five talents is, as the five prudent virgins, a faithful servant in the Word of life. He, magnifying his office, ministers the Word. Being allowed to be put in trust with the Word of life, he understands that Word, he understands the counsel of God, and preserves that Word from the "word of man" (1 Thess. ii. 13), and so makes other five talents.

He that has two, makes other two. He possesses the two principles of the covenant; they are effective in him. He abides in Christ and in the Spirit—in holiness and in righteousness. He ever seeks to call out in others Christ crucified, the one by which that he may by the Spirit working in him beget of the Spirit, so he also ministers to Christ, and makes other two talents.

But he which received the one talent went and digged in the earth, and hid the Lord's money. Here the Lord shows that he is the wicked servant (chap. xxiv. 48), and how the foolish virgins did not possess the oil, and could not, when they went to obtain some, and buy it.

19. Then after a long time the Lord of those servants comes and reckoneth with them. This long time is from his first to his second advent, when he will come again to reward every man according to his works.

20. He, then, that received five talents brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents; behold, I have gained besides them five talents more. Such are the five prudent virgins. And the Lord commends this servant who is faithful in a few things, and gives him great honour and distinction in the joy of his Lord—the joy of the bridegroom—all the blessings of the everlasting union and oneness with Father and Jesus Christ his Son.

22, 23. He, then, that received the two talents brought other two. His Lord likewise commended him, and gave him like honour and distinction.

24. But now we come to him who had received the one talent. It is, as we have said, in making effective this one talent that he realises the two, which being also made effective, we are 1

qualified, if called of God, to minister in his Word. But this one, instead of possessing the second talent, the law of righteousness, the holy love, the law of the Spirit of life, is overwhelmed with fear, and even at the last endeavours to justify his past life and conduct.

He is not ignorant of the truth. He professes it. He shows by what he did that he understood the nature of the *one talent*, that it was Christ crucified, Christ dead and buried. So we, being buried into the death of Christ, are crucified to the world, and the world to us: My disciples, says the Lord, are not of this world. Again, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth *alone*. It has not the oil, the life, the Spirit of God; it cannot have. This one hides the talent, he buries it; it is the hid treasure (chap. xiii. 44). This talent all have, therefore the foolish virgins have it. And they, like him who digs in the earth and hides it, know that they have it, know the nature of it, as he did, signified by his act. It is with this only, with this heavenly talent, that they, or any one, *can buy* the oil of the kingdom. It is only by Christ formed within that we can present the pure receptivity for the Spirit of the Son, and so possess oil in our vessels.

Not having the true Christ, casting down in his heart everything that would exalt itself against the indwelling knowledge of God, iniquity vaunts itself—Antichrist rises up and gives his answer. It is the lie, as it is in every man's mouth who says, It is impossible for any man to live Christ crucified. I know, he says, that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed, or winnowed. His words recognise the two talents, the two principles of the covenant, which should be possessed by every man, but not making effective the one talent, for redemption *is sown* in every man, for we thus judge, if one died for all, *then all died*—died to sin (2 Cor. v. 14), he says, Thou reapest where thou hast not sown. And then, assuming redemption, the breaking up of the house of bondage—the flesh, in Christ, that possessing the Spirit we may have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom—he says, Thou *gatherest* where thou hast not winnowed. While thus acknowledging the truth—redemption and blessing, for this sowing and gathering are Christ and the Spirit respectively—he,

not having experienced, not having used the one talent, having kept it as it is, for it has always been with him as the treasure, attempts to justify himself, as if he would say, I have done the best I could through fear of thee.

26. The Lord takes him on his own ground, and condemns out of his own mouth. He knows the nature of the one talent for he hides it, he buries it; and he knows that his Lord reaps and gathers. The Lord does not condescend to answer the servant but attests the truth; yea, the very words of the wicked servant attest it, and attest his own condemnation. He ought, therefore, to have put the talent to the exchangers'. Who are they but the Triune God—the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac, the Elohim of Jacob?—they, of whom the oil is to be bought, when the exchange would be not only a realisation of redemption, but of blessing. (John ii. 7—9.) And then, at his coming, he would receive his own with usury. He would see the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.

28. The Lord now comes to him as a thief, since he would not have him as a bridegroom, and says, Take, therefore, the talent from him. That *which is sown* is now taken from him. Not till now, for to the last moment of life this talent is in every man. The grace of God enables all men to work and obtain. If, then, he works, it is not the flesh that works, for the first step towards God cuts at the root of all that is of the flesh. Adam, when the Spirit leads us into all truth. And give it to him which hath ten talents. This is very significant. It indicates how truly he who has faithfully served in the ministry of the Word enters into *all* the joy of his Lord. No language can describe the high honour and distinction before the hosts of heaven which the servant, faithful in a world of error and wrong-doing, shall hereafter receive in the blessed consummation of all things.

29. For unto every one that hath shall be given. He makes effective the grace bestowed, and he will reap a yet abundant harvest; while he that hath not, who does not make effective what is given to every man, shall have taken away even that which he hath. (2 Peter i. 3.)

30. Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness. The servant is unprofitable, and because he is so, he is cast into outer

darkness. Elsewhere (Luke xvii. 10) the Lord says, When ye shall have done those things which are commanded of you, say, We are unprofitable servants, *we have done* that which it was our duty to do. From the stand-point of the truth all is clear, and there is no contradiction. In this, the unprofitableness is in not obtaining the two talents—that is, making the one effective, which it is the duty of every one to do; in that, in showing that no man can go beyond what it is his duty to do—possess holiness and love in Christ and the Spirit respectively.

Here the unprofitable servant is cast out into outer darkness. The coming of the Lord will be in the unveiled glory of the eternal God, and will be seen from one end of heaven to the other. But the unprofitable servant will be cast out, even beyond the utmost limits of the light of this glory. What, then, are all the honours, distinctions, and interests of this world worth? What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? for he will inherit not the glory of Melchizedek, but the doom of the prince of this world, who will then be cast out for ever.

31. The Lord now introduces the last parable of his second advent, and so completes the idea of his coming. In all his teaching, the second advent coincides with the end of the world. Having given the great signs of his coming, and in the first parable shown how sudden it will be, he describes the blessedness of him who fulfils his trust, and the condemnation of him who neglects it. In the second, *he teaches the indispensable obligation to make effective* the talents bestowed in order to discharge the duties of life. And now, in the third, he teaches the awful consequences of not making effective the one talent, *the common gift to all men*.

We are now brought on to the further consideration of the general judgment, which, indeed, is the only one, and at which all men will appear.

The Son of man will come in his glory. As his, it is for all men. But he will come with his holy angels, the representatives of his holiness, the crown of God's perfections. The glory of the Son will be a consuming fire going before him. He will sit upon the throne of his glory. He will come in his Melchizedekian character, a King in righteousness; in which is intensified the

idea of his unsullied purity as he comes to the overthrow of all unrighteousness, to the everlasting shame and confusion of all who are unprepared for him.

32. Before him are gathered all nations—the whole human family. None are excepted. He is attended by the angels, and the gathering of all nations denotes the end. To all nations the Gospel is to be preached, and now he comes, seated on the throne of his glory, and all are assembled before him. It is the throne of Jehovah, and the glory of the Father; and so he comes as the Son of David, the Son of Abraham—as the Son of man. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. The mode of the gathering is not stated, though implied in the separation to take place—that is, there will be a resurrection unto life, and then a resurrection unto condemnation. Whatever, then, be the difficulties of those who adhere to the letter, we cannot *import* into this subject a third class, “the elect,” as if they were already gathered. Nor can we, in the gathering of all nations, import the notion of a millenium according to the general acceptation of that term—that is, a literal thousand years. All that it can signify will be simply a period marking in fact, by the resurrection of the righteous, who have lived in the past ages of the world, to the right hand of the Father, a true Sabbath of rest. After this there will be the putting away of all evil when the righteous will shine forth in the glory of the Father. This order the Lord Jesus indicates in the following and other parables.

Whatever be the interval, if any, it will be the manifestation of righteousness in all the unsullied purity of the holiness of God. Then Satan will be bound. Here we are in nowise hampered by any idea of time, which is only a relative term. It relates to the actions of men, and since these and all that will have been done in time will then be taken into account, the thousand years cannot be literally taken. They, as we have already remarked, *simply express* the Sabbath, the true rest that remaineth for the people of God, upon which *they* first enter. Then, all that offendeth and maketh a lie will be purged away, and God will be all and in all—the second attestation to the truth, *how that God is the true rest for man*.

He will separate them as a shepherd does the sheep and goats.

There will then be no intermingling. At that day the righteous will take the right hand. It is their place, for they attest the right hand of the Lord glorious in majesty. And sinners will go to the left: for sinners shall not stand in the congregation of the righteous.

If the meaning of the term judgment be clearly understood, it will go very far to remove the difficulties of most respecting "the children of God standing before his judgment bar." No man comes there a prisoner. Sin is bound, and righteousness comes forth in all the majesty of its glory. Every man is redeemed, which redemption is a judgment against sin. The prince of this world *is* judged. Therefore, judgment will be the casting out of everything that is not of the Father.

The righteous, possessing the two talents, judgment and righteousness, have, so far as judgment is concerned, passed through it—they are already judged of the Lord by an inward faith and possess that only which is of the Father. They are the righteous, *the blessed* of the Father. A justified man, as the phrase is, is one made righteous by the indwelling of Jehovah, his righteousness. He has in Christ, so in all his power, condemned sin in the flesh, and now shows forth the righteousness of God. The final judgment will be the casting out all who know not Christ, and, so, the ungodly cannot stand in the judgment.

That separation, which will be as the shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats, will be no arbitrary decree of the great Judge determining the everlasting destiny of men. No; every one, then, will obey the instinctive law of his being. It will not be caprice that will direct the shepherd in making the division, but the nature of the animals. So, hereafter, it will be the condition within, what we are, that will determine our future.

Again, they are not all sheep, neither all goats; then the difference of nature signifies that the possibility of an after reconciliation is precluded. So, then, whatever be the different degrees of good and evil which appertain to men, there will be but two distinct classes into which they all, will be divided, or naturally separate themselves.

Overlook the distinctive conditions of the two classes, and make the judgment to be in respect of certain outward acts, then, in the literal interpretation of this prophecy, you will not only be

hampered with a third party answering to the appellation brethren," but raise numberless and insurmountable difficulties such as have come to some of the most able, logical, and clear minds, narrowed and confined to the letter, instead of standing on the mount of God, and taking a large and comprehensive view of this most august assembly.

There is, then, no difficulty in conceiving the whole household of God to be now assembled on the right hand and the left of the King.

34. Jesus speaks of himself as the King. He is our King, Christ. He has reigned in us, casting down everything that would exalt itself against the knowledge of God. And now, in the manifestation of his Kingship, on the throne of his glory, he has put away every enemy—Sin, Hades, Death; for nothing can prevail against his Church, being according to the counsel of the Triune God. The blessed of the Father are they who have loved Christ, who are of his kingdom, and who occupy until he come, and who possess the oil in their vessels, the Spirit of the Father, to whom the King says, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. They are now invited to the throne, and they, as true disciples of Christ, will judge the twelve tribes of Israel, since the middle wall of partition is broken down, signify all Israel. As Paul says, Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world? (1 Cor. vi. 2.) Their judgment will be *the expression*, even in themselves, of the holiness and glory of the Father, banishing out of darkness all that is not of him. Rejected by man, they will have honour and praise at the appearing of Christ. They will inherit the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world. This kingdom, even as the one talent, is for all. It is prepared for all before they enter upon this state of probation. And what shall this inheritance be but Christ raising us as his bride to share with him the glory of the lasting kingdom in the full blessing of the Father. The kingdom imports the idea that nothing hereafter shall mar the happiness or sully the holiness of a glorious eternity in our inheritance of the Paternal blessing.

The torment of the lost was prepared for no man, since one talent is given to every man. Men are afraid to speak

the inevitable conclusion of their false teaching of particular election, and so they deny the grace of God as bringing salvation to all men. The torment of the lost is prepared for the devil and his angels; and since man, despite the love of the Father, chooses it, because he seizes on the inheritance, being without Christ—the one talent—the judgment determines accordingly.

The King says, I was hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. These things are mentioned, showing how every one has the opportunity of putting the one talent to the exchangers'. For these, both ministers and righteous men, *as blessed of the Father*, giving expression to the second talent in a holy love, prove that they have done so. Not only is this their inward condition in the sight of God, but what they do, they do *unto Christ—that is, they call out into effect the one talent in other men*, and then they minister of what they have. They minister the Spirit to that one body—Christ, and so do it unto him.

37. Then shall they answer, saying, Lord—it is the distinguished relation in which they stand that enables them thus to address him—When saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? This is a true humility—not the world's humility, but one according to the very nature of things. Fruit, as the law of righteousness, comes forth from the righteous unnoticed by them, for it is the law of their being, their true condition. Their one desire has been to possess the two talents, to make the tree good, knowing that in its season it would bear its fruit.

Then let us guard against any self-delusion, though it may be called an unbounded philanthropy. Men may, in the providence of God, become rich in this world's goods; and they may, with *their* riches, do much to ameliorate the *outward* condition of their fellow-men, as the Pharisees of old did. But when the tree is made good—good according to God—the outward fruit will be good, will testify to the inward condition; as the Lord says, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye

have done it *unto* ME. These words of the Lord lift the whole out of the visible and tangible into the invisible and spiritual: unto the least of these my brethren. They are brethren of the King, children of the one Father, according to the eternal purpose. So, then, all are brethren; and the least of them are they who have the one talent in Christ, and have not yet obeyed it. It is the bounden duty of every man to make the gift of God effective in his own heart, and then he will seek *to call out* the same in another—that, to him making it effective, he may minister of what he has, and so minister *to Christ* formed in him. The Lord Jesus—speaking of a prophet, a righteous man, or a disciple—says, Whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, *in the name of a disciple*, shall in nowise lose his reward. A disciple, in the mind of Jesus, is not one according to the religious world, with its ten thousand various efforts to make one, but one according to God: and he is regarded by the world, because he reveals Christ, as the Lord was by him who hid the talent, with hatred and scorn.

41. Turning to those who had buried the one talent, he says—Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. Why are they cursed, when all are redeemed from the curse? The answer is obvious: simply because they did not make effective the one talent—their redemption; they would not die to sin, so were slaves of iniquity. Uncleanness, and all that was opposed to the Paternity, was their condition, and it worked accordingly. All will be divided into only two classes—the cursed and the righteous. The former may preach the Gospel, cast out devils by the Word, may do many wonderful works, but did not in themselves put the one talent to the ex-changers'. All that is not of the Father is cursed. So, at the last, when the veil of self-deception shall be removed—for it will continue till the consummation of all things—will they learn that their life has been an existence of a withering selfishness: in self-esteem, self-complacency, self-exaltation, and self-indulgence, and not the going forth of the self-sacrificing love of the Father. In one word, they are cursed because they know not Christ crucified.

The King tries them by the same operating principle—love, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. They are judged in

righteousness, and by the law of it. Christianity is no sentiment, nor worship by the carnal man. The righteous live by faith. If we would have Christ in all the power of his cross, casting down everything of wrong in ourselves and in the world, and then possess the Spirit in the never-failing activities of a holy love, we would, in all circumstances, strive to purchase out occasions for realising the eternal principles represented by the two talents, which constitute our faith, proved by our works. And so we should seek to do unto the least of our brethren: we should lead him to apprehend Christ, and then minister of the Spirit, and then unto Christ in him, minister according to his necessities.

41. The cursed, then, possessed not these talents. Had they realised the one they would have had the other. Opportunities were equally abundant to them as to others. God is no respecter of persons. They might have again and again used the one talent, and, in doing so, they would have found the other, and would have heard the gracious words of the King, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared *for you* from the foundation of the world. But it is, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. Can there be anything more simple than the reason assigned? They did it not to Christ. They hid the talent, and regarded not the opportunities for manifesting it. For if Christ crucified were magnified in them, the Spirit of life would be their portion.

Then, what earthly consideration should prevail to close the channels of a true benevolence that springs from the eternal principles of judgment and of righteousness? Well might the apostle John write, If thou seest thy *brother* have need, and shuttest up thy bowels of compassion against him, *how dwelleth the love of God in you?* The all-important question, then, is the condition of soul which determines, by its own instinctive law, our hereafter—whether it be the throne of glory or its opposite.

44. When challenged by the Lord, their answer is the same as that given by the righteous. And so it is at the last, as it has ever been: they see no difference between themselves and the righteous. All the ten virgins had their lamps—all burned brightly. But it is only he who sees the hearts, and weighs the actions, and knows the thoughts afar off, that sees the source and spring of all. It is not the outward act, but the *inward condition*, as it is

before the all-seeing, deep-searching eye of Almighty God, that determines our hereafter. Wherefore the cursed go into everlasting fire, prepared *for the devil and his angels*; while the righteous inherit the kingdom prepared *for them* from the foundation of the world.

46. The condition of the one is co-extensive with that of the other. If the æon of life be everlasting—and it must be so, according to the Paternal blessing—then that of darkness and death must be everlasting. Thus, again and again, are we reminded of the awful doom that awaits the impenitent. Then, how can any, in the face of these solemn truths, make this plain and distinct statement of the Lord to mean nothing? As if the divine love would hereafter do what it has in its full manifestation failed to do—rescue the lost. Such teaching introduces a principle of interpretation that would destroy our confidence in any one of the promises of God. It is no uncharitableness, nor selfishness, to desire the simple meaning of the passage as it stands. Otherwise we must surrender the Word of God, which testifies that he has done all that he can do, consistent with the holiness of his own nature, and the constitution of man. Wherefore to do otherwise, would be to undo himself, and to turn heaven into hell.

CHAPTER XXVI.

1 AND it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said
2 unto his disciples, Ye know that after two days is *the feast of the passover*,
and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.

3 Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders
of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas,
4 and consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill *him*. But
5 they said, Not on the feast *day*, lest there be an uproar among the
people.

6 NOW when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,
7 there came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious
8 ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat *at meat*. But when his dis-
ciples saw *it*, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste ?
9 For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.
10 When Jesus understood *it*, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman ?
11 for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always
12 with you ; but me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this
13 ointment on my body, she did *it* for my burial. Verily I say unto you,
Whosoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, *there* shall
also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.

14 THEN one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief
15 priests, and said *unto them*, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him
16 unto you ? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And
from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.

17 NOW the first *day* of the *feast of unleavened bread* the disciples came
to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat
18 the passover ? And he said, Go into the city, to such a man, and say unto
him, The Master saith, My time is at hand ; I will keep the passover at
19 thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed
them ; and they made ready the passover.

20 Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve. And as
21 they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray
22 me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to
23 say unto him, Lord, is it I ? And he answered and said, He that dippeth
24 *his* hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of man
goeth as it is written of him : but woe unto that man by whom the Son of

man is betrayed ! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.
25 Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I ! He said unto him, Thou hast said.

26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it,
27 and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat ; this is my body. And he
28 took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of
it ; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for
29 the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of
this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my
father's kingdom.

30 AND when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of
31 Olives. Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of
me this night : for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep
32 of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go
before you into Galilee.

33 Peter answered and said unto him, Though all *men* shall be offended
34 because of thee, *yet* will I never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily
I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me
35 thrice. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not
deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

36 THEN cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and
saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

37 And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to
38 be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceed-
39 ing sorrowful, even unto death : tarry ye here, and watch with me. And
he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my
Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me : nevertheless not as I
40 will, but as thou *wilt*. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them
asleep, and saith unto Peter, What ! could ye not watch with me one
41 hour ? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation : the spirit
indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.

42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if
this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.
43 And he came and found them asleep again : for their eyes were heavy.

44 And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time,
45 saying the same words. Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto
them, Sleep on now, and take *your* rest : behold, the hour is at hand, and
46 the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going :
behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

47 And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him
a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders
48 of the people. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whom-
49 soever I shall kiss, that same is he : hold him fast. And forthwith he
50 came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master ! and kissed him. And Jesus said
unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come ? Then came they, and laid
hands on Jesus, and took him.

51 And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out *his* hand,
and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off
52 his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place:
53 for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou
that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more
54 than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be
fulfilled, that thus it must be?

55 In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as
against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you
56 teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. But all this was done,
that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the
disciples forsook him, and fled.

57 AND they that had laid hold on Jesus led *him* away to Caiaphas the
58 high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. But Peter
followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat
with the servants, to see the end.

59 Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness
60 against Jesus, to put him to death; but found none: yea, though many
false witnesses came, *yet* found they none. At the last came two false wit-
61 nesses, and said, This *fellow* said, I am able to destroy the temple of God,
62 and to build it in three days. And the high priest arose, and said unto
him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it *which* these witness against thee?
63 But Jesus held his peace.

And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the
living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.
64 Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Here-
after shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and
coming in the clouds of heaven.

65 Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy;
what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his
66 blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of
death.

67 Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote *him*
68 with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who
is he that smote thee?

69 Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him,
70 saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. But he denied before *them*
71 all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And when he was gone out into
the porch, another *maid* saw him, and said unto them that were there,
72 This *fellow* was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied
73 with an oath, I do not know the man. And after a while came unto *him*
they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art *one* of them; for
74 thy speech bewrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, *saying*,
75 I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. And Peter
remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crew,
thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

1. We have no need to follow the literalists in order to find connexion here with what goes before. One there is where all it may be found. The following narratives illustrate the Lord's words. In order that his disciples, and all men throughout time, might understand the all-important truth, without which they will not be prepared at his second advent, and in respect of which all will hereafter be judged, he calls to mind an important Jewish ceremony, and his own death in relation to it.

Ye know, he says, that after two days is the passover. The word is here *πάσχα*, but that in verse 5 is *ἑορτή*, which respects the whole of the feast. The former is simply the commemorative act of Jehovah's passover. (Exod. xii. 11, 12, 14.) He passed over the Egyptians—who, as vessels of dishonour, represent sin holding dominion over the souls of men—and executed judgment, destroying their first-born, which has respect to Satan and his hosts. Thus, by his mighty hand, he wrought deliverance for the Israelites, attested by their separation, which was also implied in the blood sprinkled on the door-posts, symbolical of new life imparted consequent upon that deliverance. The neglect of a strict observance of this left the obstinate transgressor identified with sin itself. This service, then, commemorated not only the Lord's passing through the land to smite the first-born, but also his passing over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, to deliver their families, which had its fulfilment in the betrayal and death of the Lord Jesus. In the betrayal was a true representation of sin in its most detestable form—professing goodness. The betrayer represented the common nature of all men, in which the Lord took when he was made sin and the curse, and then, dying to all, he put away the sin of the world and destroyed him that had the power of death, the devil, and delivered us who, through fear of death—who knew their true condition of separation from God—were subject to bondage.

To this he refers, saying, Ye know that after two days is the passover. This they, as Jews, would know. But he would say as he had already given signs of the glory of his second coming. *Ye know* that after two days the passover will have its fulfilment in my betrayal and crucifixion—that he would be the passover for all men. And here, we repeat, that the invisible truths which all men stand related, are revealed by earthly existence.

so that the question is neither, Did the Lord know this or not; or, Did the Lord himself know that they did or did not know: but rather he was asserting that his *true disciples* would, in the deep experience of their hearts, know *the true* passover in the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. However, we shall find them to be true types of those who profess to have eaten of the passover, to be disciples of Christ, yet ignore him, as they bury the one talent instead of putting it to the ex-changers'.

Let us not imagine that the Lord has yet passed away from the very important subject so intimately connected and identified with the temple, which the disciples' question brought before him. He finds that, notwithstanding his teaching, their ears are dull of hearing, and their hearts are yet hardened. They have no spiritual discernment of the eternal verities he has set before them, but are blind, following the mere letter.

The material temple is left desolate, and now, not one stone shall be left standing upon another. The Jewish people, as a temple, are left desolate, and not one stone shall be left standing upon another, as they shall be peeled and scattered, trodden under foot of all men. The universe, as one vast temple, will, through the abomination of desolation, be left desolate, and the final judgment will be revealed, when heaven and earth shall pass away, and those things only that cannot be shaken shall remain. But the Lord Jesus is a temple, and being made a curse for us, and *becoming sin* for us, he is so destroyed by the judgment of God, as he cries, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? He is indeed desolate. But he is brought again *from the dead*; and his resurrection is a pledge *of the glory* yet to be revealed. Whosoever, then, obeys the truth in Christ crucified is a *holy* temple for the indwelling Spirit of God. Though he was made desolate through sin, he is now, in and through Christ—the true temple—made a habitation for the full blessing of the Father.

The Lord Jesus having, in the preceding chapter, set forth his glory which he will reveal with his holy angels, so reveal the *inner sanctuary*, that righteousness will abound everywhere, now calls attention to the initiatory truth—the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. And so, in these correlative truths, we behold the glorious consummation to which the beloved

disciple in his vision of the new Jerusalem testifies, saying saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. (Rev. xxi. 22.)

3. We understand, then, the Lord's ground, the ground of truth, which all, obeying, will take. But now we come to the abomination of desolation then *revealing* itself in the Jewish hierarchy, who, with uncrucified hearts, trod the sacred precincts crying, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord we see." A manifestation of the subtle working of Antichrist.

In the days of Noah they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, simply in the abomination that made the earth desolate. Then the judgment of God was revealed against it, and it was washed away, in the waters of the flood, the filth of the flesh. But here it is developing itself in a religious form. It is Antichrist in the holy place, polluting it, and so bringing down the judgment of God to its own destruction. They cast out Jesus and crucified him, but they knew not how it became the judgment, the casting out of the prince of this world, who worketh the children of disobedience. However, the judgment of man is yet impending. And we see the colossal man developing himself in the religion of the old Adam, as the chief priests and scribes and the elders of the people assembled together into the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and consulted that they might take Jesus *by subtilty and kill him*. Antichrist must displace Christ, or he is not Antichrist. At the flood the old Adam appeared in the lust of the flesh. Now we see him in the lust of the eyes, in all that is outward, and in a religious attitude. In the days of Noah it was simply the flesh. In the days of Christ it was a religious attitude—the *old Adam garnished*. But at the last, in these our days, it will be, as we see his features intruding themselves, even now, in the holy place, the carnal mind, the mind of man gradually developing itself in a spiritual form as true Christianity, but which is only a knowledge that puffeth up the fleshly mind.

5. An apathetic indifference, or a malignant hostility, though clothed in all the sanctions of a holy religion, show unmistakably how that the one talent is hid. And the miserable cowardice of this ungodly condition is seen not only in the rejection of Christ crucified, but in the yielding to the influence of outward circum-

stances. It is not expedient for these men to do their work openly and before all men, lest there be an uproar of the people. However, in the providence of God, the cup is drained to its dregs, and the baptism is accomplished. Sin is seen and realised in its fearful nature, but the arm of Jehovah is manifested in a blessed and glorious redemption.

We contemplate the truth in the *true* temple which the beloved disciple described even where he wrote of Jesus, who said, Destroy this temple, and I will raise it up in three days, for he tells us that he spake of the temple of his body. And although in respect of this he had said, he tabernacled with us and we beheld his glory, the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, yet he spake of the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world, that God might be all and in all. Wherefore, of the new Jerusalem he writes, I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple in it. Now, against this the abomination of desolation is working, and it works in all the *deceivableness* of unrighteousness. But now we approach, as illustrating the words of Jesus—yea, the very Gospel—one of the most touching and marvellously instructive passages in the Word of God. Wherefore, not to interpret it in the light of the glorious truths to which Jesus has testified, would be to obscure the Sun of righteousness, to deceive man, and to advance the cause of Antichrist; for if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle?

6. In the midst of the gloom and darkness which then everywhere surrounded the blessed Redeemer, there was one bright spot where the Father was glorified; and Christ, whom the many denied and rejected, was magnified. While Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came, having an alabaster box of very precious ointment. Matthew notes the fact that it was in the house of a leper. Simon may have been healed by the Lord, when he first came to Bethany, and so this feast may have been a thank-offering to the Lord. The simple mention of Jesus sitting with a leper, and eating with him, would be a striking testimony to the truths taught by the passover and the feast in the preceding verses; but a greater testimony is vouchsafed us. However, it is expressive, for whomsoever the Lord heals of the leprosy of sin, he sups with him and he with

the Lord—they are partakers of the one and the same blessing. As the Lord then sat at meat, a woman came unto him having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and attested these truths as she poured the very precious ointment on his head. She had indeed taken her one talent to the exchangers', and traded with it what she had received.

She comes to the Lord on a ground common to all. And in the simplicity of her faith and act, with respect to the great learning, deep research, and profound erudition of the Rabbis or other masters of theology, we can well ask, in the triumphal words of the Apostle, Where is the wise? Where is the scribbler? Where is the disputer of this world? In this woman of straitened circumstances, of humble mien, and retiring deportment, Christ has brought to nought the wisdom of the wise and the understanding of the prudent. Her act is commended of the Lord, not to encourage us to seek fame and reputation by any means, much less to tell us that there are occasions or seasons that would justify extraordinary expense, but as a symbolic expression of her faith and love, "While the King sitteth at table my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof." (Cant. i. 12) It was the sweet odour of the grace she possessed. It was sweet incense that goes up in the holy place—that is, in Christ, acceptable to God as a sweet smelling odour, instead of the abomination, the βδελυγμα, that maketh desolate. It is a precious ointment, for it is the outcoming of the Spirit of life in Christ. She had put off the old Adam, and this is the outcome of the last. It is the holy love of God, the two talents to which she here gives expression, and which cannot be hid. She presented to Melchizedek, her King, the seed of the woman that should bruise the serpent's head, whose death and burial should be the judgment of this world and the casting out of the prince of it. She sees in his death her death, in his burial her burial. It is the one talent, and she obeys the truth. Having, then, done what she could to Christ, put the one talent to the exchangers', she further possesses the true unction from above—Holy Spirit, of which also the pure nard is the symbol, and which like the perfume, cannot be hid; for when in Christ all enemies are destroyed, and all opposition is removed, the inexhaustible, never failing love, the law of the Spirit of life, will gush forth. [

sessing, then, Christ crucified, and the Spirit of life, she does what she could *unto Christ*.

The Lord, in the judgment, will not condemn us in respect of temporal things, but in respect of eternal. He who gives meat *in due season*, feeds the hungry, gives drink to the thirsty, and clothes the naked, visits the sick, houses the stranger, and visits the prisoner. And thus, where Christ is, where the true body is, we allow nothing to scandalize any member, however weak, but we minister to it and strengthen it, and who shall do this, but he that is faithful with the one talent. And so, we see here what is the condition of him who obeys the truth. This woman represents it in the going forth of the precious unguent. And, further, we see what is the one aim and object. It is to honour and magnify the body of Christ that it may be a true temple—a habitation for God by the Spirit.

Some may build churches, erect hospitals, improve the dwellings of the poor and supply their temporal wants, and, after all, advance only the cause of Antichrist, for unless it be a true sympathy springing from the Spirit of Christ within, breaking every yoke, we do it not *unto Christ*.

8. Then, when the disciples saw it, instead of commending, in Christ, the deed, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? is this destruction?—as if it was all irretrievably lost—for this oil might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. The disciples, now only professed followers, and, like all such, take the Lord's words literally. They have a great consideration for the poor, and would do much for them: they would feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, &c., and so would rather do this than regard the truth itself in the heart of this woman, *expressing itself* on its right and proper object, and according to the necessity of the case, *unto Christ*. It would be no answer to say, This or that is done unto Christ; for where Christ crucified is, a holy love obeys its own law, and rejoiceth not in iniquity—*ἀδικία*—but rejoiceth in the truth. (1 Cor. xiii. 6.) Paul well understood this, as he says, Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing. The disciples call to mind the Lord's words. They would signify that they do not forget the solemn description of the last judgment, and

would so interpret it as to make their acceptance or rejection dependent on their conduct to the poor. They could not understand this remarkable illustration of the Lord's teaching with this woman's act afforded. Had they embraced the truth in the qualification, the watching, the preparedness for the Lord's advent—a deep and holy love revealing itself for the service of *body of Christ* (Col. ii. 17, 10 and 11; and i. 24), they would have encouraged her.

10. In their indignation, which was most strongly expressed, they doubtless reproached the woman: perceiving which, the Lord reproved them saying, *Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. It is emphatically good. And so she is the blessed of the Father, and has passed from condemnation into life. The Lord's judgment of her is different to what they expected. They had taken his description of the last judgment literally, and so are disappointed—as many hereafter will be who are now complacent.*

11. The Lord rejects their interpretation of his words, and shows distinctly what he means—that it is not a ministering to the poor as such, but *to him who dwells in all* who are in the "poor in spirit." The poor ye have always with you, *but me ye have not always.* You must look for me, search me, and, above all, when you find me, not fail to recognise me, for ye have *not always.* These words necessitate not only a possession of the two talents, but the gaining of other two, by ministering to others in order to do it unto Christ (Col. ii. 19, 20), in endeavour to convert to Christ, or, if converted, to a manifestation that *the body* may make increase and so possess the *true anointing.* This woman watched, and so honoured me; for in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my body. Her heart, with all its fulness, went forth to her King as to attest his death and burial, and so the death and burial of men. Her lot was one with Christ. (Col. i. 24.) What, then, is required of us? How are we to understand this woman's act in the midst of the all-important truths of the last day and judgment, and as illustrating it? We are to seek not only the body of Christ, that all may hold the head—be members of that body, but also that they may have the blessing of righteousness from the God of their salvation. This is *to anoint the body of Christ*

We do what we can : we help the least of the brethren of Christ to stand in the congregation of the righteous, and to have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of God.

The woman, in her true humility, would have shunned the presence of others. She anointed the Lord for his burial as the way to his glory. But the disciples, so far from understanding the Lord's words, describing a faithful and wise servant, and fulfilling them, would deprive her of her blessing ; they would check its coming forth. She, with her two talents, gained other two ; while they were no better than the five foolish virgins, as they, chosen to bear the lamp of the Word of God to a benighted world, were as yet strangers to the one talent bestowed upon all men.

Salt that has lost its savour is no longer salt ; light that has lost its power is no longer light. So is it with judgment and righteousness—if the former loses its power, it ceases to be, and righteousness becomes unrighteousness. But where there is judgment, the law of righteousness, like the odour of the precious ointment, *must go forth*. She anoints her King, and, in this simple act, she witnesses *to the Gospel*. She illustrates the truth that will enable us hereafter to stand in the judgment and in the congregation of the righteous. In holy love she expressed her faith—the one faith, Christ Jesus in us, demonstrated in the life. In Christ she was holy ; in the Son she possessed love—the law of the Spirit of life—and so a holy love went forth, and it went forth to the body of Christ, bearing witness to his death and burial—the death and burial of that one body of which we all are members, and to which she did what she could. So all who have partaken of the true paschal feast (Rom. viii. 10) will, like her, do what they can to the body of Christ. They will seek to find this body. But how ? They will possess Christ, manifest him, teach him to others, and so patiently watch for him in all men. But against this body, as now revealed in the woman, the disciples have indignation. They not only strive against the truth as possessed by the woman, and going forth to the body of Christ, but in all the deceivableness of unrighteousness they would put the poor of this world—the outwardly poor—for the body of Christ. We again repeat it, the disciples as yet were only outwardly followers. They understood not the kingdom, and so confounded a minister-

ing to the hungry, the thirsty, the naked of this world, with doing it to the body of Christ.

In the disciples we see the old Adam, which, at the best, is an abomination before God. But, in the woman, we see the last Adam, and her spikenard gives forth the smell thereof. Whatever, then, be the intellectual light of men, however high and distinguished their position, if they possess not Christ—the one vessel for the true oil, the anointing of the Holy Ghost—they are only as the foolish virgins. And we have seen how men know *the one talent*, which is given to all, yet put it not out to the exchangers'; and so, when God deals with them in his outward and perfect providence, in order to their doing so, they murmur and repine and have hard thoughts of him—in a word, they have *indignation*.

And there are those who profess to have the two talents, and would give expression to them by meeting the temporal necessities of the poor of this world. They know not Christ crucified, dead, and buried: therefore, all their efforts are only outward in their tendency. They must be so, for they are yet only in the old Adam, not having made effective the one talent in putting it out to the exchangers'.

13. The Lord Jesus sends his disciples, and all who would preach the Gospel, to preach the truth. Whatever theories they propose, whatever faith the old Adam may accept, the Lord Jesus lays emphasis on the fact of this woman anointing him for *his burial*: this is the hid treasure, the one talent given to all to trade with. Wheresoever, then, the Gospel is preached, let men begin here. They must do so if they preach the Gospel *of Christ*. Wheresoever throughout the whole world the Gospel is preached, there what this woman did unto the body of Christ must be told as a memorial of her. Who, then, in the place of this simple illustration of the Gospel, will set up his figments of doctrine, since it has the benign approval of the Lord himself?

In the parables given in the preceding chapter all men are included, then in them every man will find himself. And here, in the Jewish hierarchy, in the disciples, as represented by Judas, or in the woman, may every religious professor find himself.

14. Then *one of the twelve*, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the

chief priests. Matthew would here draw the contrast between the woman and *the twelve*. He is not afraid to speak the truth, for he can do nothing against it in a faithful testimony. The truth requires no apologists. As yet, not one of them knew Christ, much less the Spirit of Christ, still less the law of the Spirit. They present the highest form of type of all ignorant of the truth, who are truly represented by one—Judas Iscariot. He is the Esau, the old Adam, that sells his birthright for a mess of pottage. He is simply, with all his treachery, the carnal man—one with the abomination that maketh desolate. He went to the chief priests and betrayed his Master. The salient point is in his words, “What will ye *give me*?” He says not, indeed, “What will ye give to the body of Christ?” as the Lord had taught them all, but what will ye *give me*? Instead, then, of that self-sacrificing love, to which Paul testified (Rom. ix. 3 : Phil. ii. 17 : and Col. i. 24) in seeking the eternal welfare of others, selfishness is revealed. If Christ be not lifted up in the heart, and the cross be not glorified in, whatever be the form the act may take, it flows from a source that, however imperceptible to mortal eye, is only selfishness. To give to Christ is one thing, to give “to me” is another. And why is it that men do not give to Christ—give according to the teaching and power of Christ—for men will take up these words, since Antichrist is in all the *deceivableness* of unrighteousness—simply because they hide the one talent of heaven for the few pieces of silver of this world. But what will it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?

However painful be this picture of our common nature, Matthew brings out in striking contrast righteousness and unrighteousness. And we must ever be grateful that we are not left to the theories of those who would destroy the landmarks of our glorious inheritance.

But we can go to the Word, which internally, and in every part, attests its own inspiration, and as its truths become realities in us, and in their order, we know whose we are, and whom we serve. He, then, who is not one with Christ, will, like Judas, betray him for a few pieces of silver. Voluptuary, worldling, religionist—each in his way, would say, “I would not serve the flesh, the world, or sin;” but let him fail, as he must do, to fasten the old man continually to the cross, and keep him there,

and he will find for how little a matter he will part with the talent.

16. The woman gave testimony to her faith as she anointed body of Christ to the burial; while Judas left no means untried deliver him over to the abomination of desolation. According these two types will be the judgment of the human family. We then, shall overrate the importance of a clear apprehension these truths. Do we possess Christ crucified and the Spirit of holy love? If so, the sweet odour must go forth. And it go forth to all men, for all are predestinated unto life, but they have the fearful power of rejecting it. God has cleansed the world; therefore nothing is common or unclean. Then our love go forth to anoint the body of Christ to the burial—to persuade men to the obedience of the truth, that they may put the one talent in the exchangers', and so possess the same holy love.

17. The disciples are impressed, mortified, and ashamed. The Lord had said unto them, Ye know that after two days is the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed. He had reproved their officious indignation, and commended the act of the woman as she had wrought a good work upon him, for she had anointed his body for the burial. They do not yet understand how that he is the Paschal Lamb, and that they are to be one with him, *suffer in the flesh*. Still, cleaving to outward things, they would in their way, emulate the woman. They ask, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover? They apprehend not the spiritual, the true passover—how they should partake it. They see not the necessity of making effective what is already given them, but ask, Where can we prepare for thee? The answer is a reproof. It not only regards the spiritual, but intimates that another, like the woman, has sat at the feet of Jesus, and learned of him. "Go into the city, to a certain man and say unto him, The Teacher saith, My time is at hand." That was it to Nicodemus they went? for he was one of the first to anoint the body of Christ for the burial. They did as they were commanded.

The passover and feast were typical of him who is sacrificed for us. The woman saw the true temple—the death and the glory. She understood the relation of the shadow to the substance.

It is a difficulty with some to reconcile the various statements

of this passover. It appears that the Lord partook of the passover on the Thursday, the 13th of Nisan. It was anticipatory. *As the true Passover*, he would keep the law. To observe the Jewish passover on the day before would not break the law, since the outward ceremonial law, so long as it existed, was only a shadow, but the body that threw that shadow was Christ. Therefore the true Paschal Lamb must suffer on the 14th, because it has *so* cast its shadow. The law is kept in the substance, and not in the shadow. It would, then, be most truly kept in the substance, taking its proper place, and the shadow going before, like the whole of the Jewish economy, which is now to be abolished. Moreover, since the disciples were cleaving to shadows, and did not apprehend at all the substance, the Lord would impress them, preparatory to the great reality, by the unusual observance, and so lead them to meditate the reason and understand his own betrayal and death according to the Scripture. The day of the Sabbath is about to be changed because of the reality, then why not the passover, if the reality necessitated it? And the verbal difficulty does not appear to be insurmountable. The account given by John is doubtless correct. Luke, addressing Gentiles, would speak of the whole of Thursday as he would of the evening, and therefore of the days of unleavened bread being come; while in Matthew and Mark the numeral adjective is capable of the rendering it has in John i. 15; xv. 18.

21. In the consideration of the great subject which now comes before us, and which has been a matter of controversy from the time of the Apostles till now, and will be so long as there are true witnesses for Christ,—for it is of the genius of Antichrist to pervert, especially in respect of the supper, the simple teaching of the Lord—facts which are patent to every unprejudiced and independent reader of Holy Writ have been ignored or overlooked. Harmonists and interpreters in general may conjecture, and plaintively lament their inability to assign, the precise order of the events, but we repudiate their ground. Of the facts ignored the first is the *unbroken* connexion, not indeed in the letter, but in the truth *revealed* in the Gospel narratives. The second is the disciples representing all men, and at the best only outwardly followers of the Lord, thus, while he is with them, showing outwardly and visibly what is required of all who are of

the kingdom. Thus the same error which possessed the twelve taking the Lord's words literally, is perpetuated. They did this as we have already seen, in respect of the last judgment, so that they were reprov'd of the Lord. They thought that when they fed the hungry poor they did it unto Christ, and, therefore, when the woman, filled with the Spirit, gave expression of her blessing, as she profusely poured out on the head of Jesus of the precious spikenard, they said, Wherefore is this waste? for it might have been sold for much, and given to the poor? But the Lord, replying, said, Ye have the poor always with you; but ye have not always.

And as they were eating, he said, Verily I say unto you—I tell one of you—so unto all men, for all are of the old Adam—they will betray me. These words, "while they were eating," are important, for they are again mentioned, and they are emphasized. What, then, do they signify? It may be said, "They were fulfilling an ordinance of God." But, then, what does the ordinance signify? How true it is with respect to spiritual things that men do not consider, for if they did they would not be satisfied with the unmeaning replies and empty platitudes of teachers. What, then, was it intended to represent? A passover and deliverance out of Egypt. But, then, was the redemption of Egypt the great truth *expressed* by the paschal feast? The Jews carefully and strictly observed the ordinances of God. Jehovah answers, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me." After describing the nation as one great leper, so desolate and still more so as overthrown by strangers, God, in bringing them up as children, is revealing himself as the Father. They are rulers of Sodom and people of Gomorrah, for they despise their hearts are mockers of the Paternal blessing. They do not hear the word of Jehovah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith Jehovah: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When shall I come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination—*βδελυγμα*—unto me; the new moons and Sabbaths the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; even the sole

meeting is iniquity—*ἀδικία*. (Is. i. 2, 11—13.) And why does he thus speak? Because they did not consider, they did not understand, and therefore did not realise *the spiritual* in a redemption from all evil. They were to cease to do evil, to learn to do well—that is, good and not evil was to work in them, and then the ordinances would be a fit *expression*, an outward witness, a coming forth of redemption from all that was not of the Father, and a blessing of all that was. The paschal lamb, with its accompaniments, bore witness to a redemption under the mighty hand of God. In the lamb was the death, in the bitter herbs the crucifixion, a reality in putting off the body of the flesh; and then, in the unleavened bread, a testimony that the old leaven was purged out altogether. Thus the worthies of the Old Testament (see Heb. xi.) lived, of whom also Peter himself testifies, saying, the Spirit of Christ which was in them, testified beforehand the *sufferings of Christ* and the glory which should follow. (1 Pet. i. 11.) And their eating the paschal lamb signified an incorporation, not of the outward and material, but of the inward and spiritual; and since they possessed this *already*, as the redeemed of the Lord, their keeping the feast was the making effective the grace already bestowed, the outcoming, the *expression* of that inward condition of the heart already possessed. This was the Lord's idea. It was also Matthew's, as he says, while they were eating—that is, according to the mind of the Lord Jesus, and according to what it ought to have been with them, while they were expressing such an inward condition—he said unto them, One of you will betray me. Instead, then, of possessing and continuing in that condition of heart, which would naturally express itself according to what they were doing, they were in that condition which must so express itself in betraying him. Such were they all in contrast to the woman who inwardly possessed and expressed the blessing of the Gospel; so, then, wheresoever in the whole world the Gospel shall be preached, that she hath done shall also be told for a memorial of her.

22. They were exceedingly sorrowful at his words. Was it a grief according to the Gospel? Were they not rather grieving lest it should be said of any one of them that he was the betrayer? Had they seen the nature, the common nature of all, and understood how that that nature does and must betray the Christ,

must and will sell him for a morsel of meat, they would never have asked, Is it I? It was a selfish grief; for until we mourn the presence of sin instead of sins—for they mourned the outward act, the fruit, and not the source—we are still in unrighteousness. When a man begins to know himself he learns what sin is, and he mourns, *not* the outward *visible* act, but that fearful, inward, invisible condition, the common lot of all men. Since they do not apprehend this, the Lord answers them accordingly, and takes their ground. He says, It is he who dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. And his words appear to have no other effect upon them than to remove their slavish fears. This is confirmed by one of them, who distinctly says, "No one knew why Judas went out." Men are indignant at what they think, and outwardly see to be wrong, but they do not mourn sin. They do not see how that the wrong act of any man is the expression of a nature which is in every man, and which can be dealt with and subdued only by and in Christ crucified, of which the paschal lamb and it eaten was the sign and seal or expression.

24. The Lord brings them back to the Old Testament, which testifies to his sufferings. It reveals him as the Lamb of God, stricken, and so made a leper—bruised for our iniquities, and suffering that we might be healed. (Is. liii.) If, then, they reject the revelation of the Word they reject Christ, and *the sign* will be a testimony against their own souls.

25. Judas now asks, as the others did. The Lord has endeavoured to bring them to the understanding of the Word, and since he cannot bring each for himself to look within himself and examine himself whether he be in the faith, he speaks out before them all, saying, Σὺ εἶπας—thou sayest. Thou sayest the very thing. As if the betrayer, in all the solemnity of an adjuration, had put the question, and the Lord answered accordingly.

26. There is no greater mistake than to attempt to harmonize the several independent and different statements of this feast by supplementing details to each record from the others. To do so, would be to confound the ideas of each writer, who uses only so much as gives effect to his line of ideas, and leaves out much, that the salient truths of his record may come prominently out. Our Evangelist says, "While they were eating." He is still on the

same ground as he was in respect to the feast of the passover. But here, in the Lord's supper, is not only a fuller revelation, but an advanced truth brought prominently forward. We must not here import into this subject from other Evangelists what Matthew has not thought proper to record. His omission of what he must have known, and of what the others record, is very significant. The bread and wine bear witness to what the body and the blood respectively witness—the broken body is Christ crucified, and the resurrection life is the life of the Spirit poured out upon all flesh. Thus, the order and nature of the truth are distinctly set forth. Then, while they were eating: the same elements which accompanied the paschal feast, express the supper of the Lord. The supper to any man is no more than the paschal feast was to the Jew. The grace of God is upon all men. All are saved—redeemed, and blessed. It is, therefore, for every man to *work out* his own salvation, of which the sacrament of the supper would be a fit *expression*. But it is within the power of every man to cut himself off from the covenant mercies of God, and, in the partaking of the sacrament, to eat his own condemnation. But if we be in Christ, we are redeemed; then, in the Spirit, walking after the Spirit and not the flesh, the law of the Spirit of life *in Christ Jesus* continually operating, keeps us free from that other law of sin and death in the flesh. Thus, we work out our salvation even as the supper taught.

The breaking of the bread is accompanied with the blessing. Do we not see in this breaking and blessing the death of Christ and the outpoured Spirit of the Father? Then taking the cup with the wine in it is *the expression* of the Spirit in us—of the oil in our vessels—and with it is thanksgiving; which giving of thanks is for the great mercy of our God in redeeming us unto himself. We have already explained the miracles of the five loaves and the seven loaves: the former as the written Word—the Old Testament, fulfilled in Christ crucified; and the latter as the *fulness* of the covenant in the outpoured Spirit. In respect to these two miracles, the Evangelist attaches the distinctive acts of the Lord Jesus of blessing and of giving of thanks respectively. In both he signifies the two great and inseparable truths of the covenant, attested by the blessing and thanksgiving, and expressed

in each miracle: *its own proper truth being the more prominent.* is the case with respect to the two givings of the law in the *old* and the Sabbath. It is also in respect to the two sacraments. Baptism is a burial into death, which is followed by the outpoured Spirit—the former being the prominent truth. In the supper of the Lord is the expression of the life of the Spirit, yet in it we set forth the Lord's death till he comes. The importance of a apprehension of the distinctive truths of the covenant of God of their order cannot be overrated, for they, being thus laid out, give us the assurance of knowing our true condition before God, and enable us, in coming to the Word, to understand everlasting truths therein revealed, unclouded by the prejudicial predilections, and difficulties of men.

We may here incidentally remark that the Syrophen woman stands out attesting Christ, the Son of David; while the Samaritan woman with anointing spikenard attests him as her Lord, and he is the Blessed of the Father. And because of this she is remembered, for she knew him as her Lord, who yet as her King, would enter the chamber of death and spoil death, so, as he would die for all men, her love so expressed itself in the body of Christ. His death was not a penalty; for what was made sin—made a curse—he therein experienced, what we fail now to experience, a truer death than that which *the world* itself, whatever was his physical suffering, could inflict. As he was separated from God, and his departure from this visible state of things *was a sign* of his departure, as the scapegoat, in a land desolate and uninhabited. He, then, bore away the sin of the world, and redeemed all subject to bondage. And then his blood, as poured out—which could be only as consequent on death, consequent on redemption—was the Spirit poured out, extensive with redemption, for the remission of sins. The truth of God is a truth of order. It is only in Christ that we have redemption, and then, in the Spirit of life, full remission: as written, In whom we have redemption, through his blood remission of sins. We *first* trust in Christ, and then are sealed with the Spirit of promise: (Eph. i. 7, 12, 13.)

The bread and wine, then, do not impart to us what we already possess as faith. For if we have faith, as a grain of mustard seed we have more than all that is visible and tangible can impart.

All things tangible in the true worship of God are *only expressive* of what we possess as members of the body of Christ. Therefore, the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? And the cup which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? (1 Cor. x. 16.) Around the words "This is my body," the stress of a mighty controversy has rolled for hundreds of years. No man can deny it. It is evident, even now, amongst professing Christians. But whence is it? Is it of God or of man? Have not men been, and are they not now, still fighting for their own conceits? and so, they miss the truth in its simplicity. They have not taken the Lord's ground. Ministers boast of the numbers of *their* communicants, but the body of Christ is one, and according to the measure of Christ is that body filled with the Spirit of God. We are of this body by *faith alone*—that is, we make effective what is. The inner sap empties itself into fruit, and the outward signs, then, are the simple outcoming or expression of Christ and the Spirit in us, outwardly signifying what is the condition within. When our life, then, continues according to these signs, a holy love goes forth ministering in the Spirit to every man that he may, according to the teaching of these signs, know Christ, and have the blessing of the Spirit, and so is the body of Christ annointed *to the burial*.

29. The Lord, foreseeing how, throughout all time, as in these men who represent all men, the great truths before him would be misunderstood, being regarded, on the one hand, simply outwardly, and on the other, literally, he says, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it *new* with you in my Father's kingdom." From Adam to Noah was a period in which redemption was prominently revealed. It was the revelation of Jehovah. From Noah to Moses was the revelation of the Elohim—a Triune God blessing man. Again, from the beginning to David was redemption. After him to Christ was the revelation of the Spirit in the prophets. Again, from the beginning to Christ, during the whole of the Old Testament, was redemption, and from Christ to the end of the world in the New Testament is the fuller revelation of the Father's blessing. Again, from the beginning to the end of time will be a continual redemption; and then, from the end of time throughout a coming eternity,

will be the fulness, the consummation, in the glory of the Lord. We here have a glimpse of the scope of the words of Jesus. They have respect not only to this dispensation, when we have the earnest of the Spirit, but to that also when we, through the Spirit, shall possess Him without measure, and *we shall* the Lord's death till he come.

The Lord Jesus has in the preceding verse spoken of the Spirit of the New Testament: it is the Spirit. The Old Testament was fulfilled in Christ, the New in the Spirit; for by the baptism of Christ we are dead to sin, that we in Spirit might have life. This is the relation signified by the Old and New Testaments. The old is fulfilled in the putting off of the old Adam; the other in the putting on of the New Man. Thus, in truth, Christ drinks the wine new with us in the kingdom of his Father. We, then, that put on Christ Jesus and walk in him in love, in the law of the Spirit of life, is translated into the kingdom of the dear Son—into the Father's kingdom. Are we, then, to suppose that these material things have any place in the kingdom of God, and that the Lord partakes of them—that he will drink of the fruit of this vine? Unrighteousness can see this well enough and seeks to deceive. It says, "It is the Spirit of Christ that is in the element of wine which we drink." But it is not so. The Lord Jesus possesses the Spirit without measure; *he does therefore, partake of it*: and we, in a living faith, being one with him, sup with him and he with us—that is, have communion with him in what he already possesses; which we express, even as expressed by him drinking the wine, in the outcoming of a love, as *signified* by the anointing oil of the woman, and now is by the wine in the Lord's supper.

30. This simple incident denotes that the passover and supper were one and the same meal; and the former giving place to the latter denoted the fulfilment of the purpose of God in the principles of the covenant—in the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and the outpoured Spirit, so that the way into the holiest of all was now made perfect.

31. Again does the great Teacher of Israel seek to bring us through a true knowledge of themselves, to a right apprehension of his work. The citation has its fulfilment in the inward and invisible. The passage is always true. Men are scandalized

Christ—when the Shepherd is smitten, the sheep are scattered. They will not know Christ crucified, *and the cause of it*. Why, then, is the Shepherd smitten? and why are the sheep scattered? The imagery may be simple enough, yet it conveys a great reproach, and Peter felt it; but, like all ignorant of themselves, he protested against it, instead of enquiring into the truth of it.

The Lord refers directly to Zech. xiii. 7, where we read of Jehovah smiting his fellow, the Holy One of Israel. The word smitten, נָכַח, is used in Is. liii. 4. Why does Jehovah smite him? The Lord was leading them to a spiritual apprehension of his words, that they might not be scattered, but watch for him, their true Shepherd. Isaiah says, he bore our griefs and carried our sorrows. The prophet understood *the nature of sin, and what it was to mourn and grieve on account of it*. Wherefore, because of sin was the visage of Jesus marred more than that of any man. But he was accounted stricken, smitten of God, as if *for himself*, and they, beholding him, would so understand it, and would be scandalized in him that very night.

The verse under consideration is not restricted to the citation, and therefore we are led, as the Lord would lead his disciples, to the consideration of the context. The prophet Zechariah tells us of the utter degradation of the land and the people, idols and false prophets being the characteristics of their state and condition. The people kept not the statutes of Jehovah, but followed the customs of the nations around them. The practice referred to in the judgment of Jerusalem (Jer. xvi. 6) stands in connexion with the judgment of God against his Holy One. It expresses the utter degradation of a people who were called out to be a peculiar people, a holy people, the children of Jehovah. Then because of their iniquities, which he would bear, and because of their sin, which would pierce him, he would be the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness—sin and its effects, inwardly and outwardly—for the land would be cleansed by him, who is pierced, the unclean spirit and false prophets—as sin and the highest form of its manifestation—would pass out of it. But if, after this, any one should prophecy, speaking lies in the name of Jehovah, he should be slain by his parents—the authors of his being. Remarkable words, as we have before us Jehovah smiting his fellow. Do they not intimate the relation in which they stood? They shall

mourn for him whom they had pierced, as one mourneth *for only son*. They would then know sin and death, and how sin had destroyed the relationship. But the false prophet *is* slain by his father or his mother, because, as the false prophet has already, in sin, denied the reality, the true relation; *so* outwardly, as a false prophet, the shadow is dishonoured. *Then* mourn, then, as the Father, the one who mourneth for his *only Son*, whom he spared not, but gave him up for us all. Judgment is the Father's strange work. He hates sin. Let us, *then*, stand on the same ground, and with him hate it, and we *will* mourn it. The only Son is made sin for us Ishmaels. *Then* us hate it even as the father and the mother who would slay false prophet, though he was their only son. Men do not *know* what it is to hate sin till they *know themselves*, know that heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. *When* they see this universal and unalterable condition, and see *that* the Holy One, the only Son, was made sin for us, they mourn, *as one mourneth for an only son*. Then there will *be* no hypocrisy to deceive, but true repentance.

Jehovah's fellow, he that shall be pierced, will not, when comes, claim for himself any such distinction as that of prophet for the law of Christ crucified is the emptying of self (Phil. ii. 7) the crucifixion of that nature he had taken, of man, and of all glory of man; therefore Christ glorified not himself to be made high priest, which belonged to his Sonship. His ministerial work wherein he appeared as the true Prophet, was proleptical, belonged to a period subsequent to his being pierced, but was wounded in the house of his friends. (Lev. xix. 28: Deut. xiv. 6) For, then, he who was holy became *one with his friends*, became unholy, unclean—was made sin for us, when the sword of Jehovah went forth *against his fellow*. Then the Shepherd smitten for the sheep, and the sheep were scattered. All here darkness, thick darkness; the wrath of a holy God poured out to the uttermost. His friends were dead to *God* *dead in sin*, then for their sakes he was wounded, he was with them. So he that was holy became unholy, became unclean that the unclean spirit and false teaching might be put away from the land. He laid down his life for his friends (John xv. 13; Luke xi. 5, 6); no man took it from him, he laid it down

himself. Of his own will he became thus wounded, and so he did the will of him that sent him. He put away sin by the sword of Jehovah, and opened up to the *house of David*, to them who obey the truth as it is in Christ, a fountain for sin and uncleanness. Wherefore two parts will be cut off—that is, all that come short of a true death with him to sin; but the third, they who partake of this death, the remnant that shall be saved, will be holy, and God will purify them by the fire of his holiness, and will acknowledge them as his people, and they will say, Jehovah is *my God*.

We now clearly discern the meaning of the citation, as it stands in the closest connexion with the words of the false prophet, which are applied to Christ. Let us not in any indulgence of sentiment be more righteous than Scripture requires us to be. Christ was identified with all men when he was made sin, and tasted death for every man; he was, therefore, identified with the Jewish nation—yea, with every false prophet, that the unclean spirit and the false prophet might be put out of the land. Against him, as Jehovah's fellow, did the sword arise, even the holy flaming sword with which he is smitten. This word is the same as that rendered "wounded" in the preceding verse. The heathen sympathize *with the dead*; so Jehovah's fellow, made one with all in their degradation, is wounded with no mere outward sign, or token of grief, but with death itself in its most fearful and intensive form—in a separation from all that is holy and good. He is wounded in the house of his friends. In the bitter cup that he had to drink, he bears away *the sin* of the world. The holy sword of Jehovah, to this end, goes against the Shepherd of the sheep; but the sheep are scattered, men are scandalized.

He was wounded for our transgressions. ללן might signify his heart was penetrated with the deepest sorrow; and by his stripes and bruises we are healed. Mary, as she anointed him—her King, and for his burial, saw how he had identified himself with her condition, and had through death, and burial, cleansed her from all that was hateful to God; but with her the disciples had indignation; and in their Lord they are scandalized.

The truth concerning Christ must be held fast, whatever be the conduct of men in respect of it. Sad indeed is the contrast; the sheep are scattered, exhibiting the corruption of the human heart.

All are offended with him, who not only brings out sin in relief that he may put it away, but also identifies himself with men, that he may deliver them. Men are indeed offended, scandalized in the cross. They will deny Christ, rather than be crucified to the world, and the world to them. Hence sin uncrucified that scatters and separates. Christ is on them, that they may be one with him. But sin lies within, known, and in undisturbed security. Still the cross gathers when effectively lifted up within, the Spirit, by his holy draws all men unto the true Shepherd and one Bishop of souls, who, as such, goes before them into Galilee.

32. In these words the Lord not only vouchsafes encounter, but leads them to a thoughtful consideration of the prophecy. Men do not think. If the people of God would consider what is written, would they be distracted by the thoughts of men? Those who would profess the strongest friendship, strongest attachment, even to the person of the Redeemer, they do not consider, do not embrace in its simplicity the cross of Christ, will deny him; and so will earthly friendships who come in his name. Though smitten with the sword of Jehovah, he will rise again. The Holy One will not see corruption. Hades will not prevail. But the Captain of our salvation will establish his kingdom in honour and in glory.

The allusion to Galilee would intimate that they all, who are offended with Jesus, would return each to his own home. who finds the cross an offence returns to that from whence he came, like the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. However, the Lord does not forsake them. Though the Shepherd was smitten, and the sheep were scattered, the cross gathers them, and he, as the good Shepherd, goes before them in the power of his resurrection life. They may be offended, scandalized in him, made sin, suffering the accursed death, bearing the shame of the cross, nevertheless, he forgets not, forsakes not man, whom he has redeemed. Thus the grace of God precedes all men, even when in their waywardness they deny him.

33. Peter, with overweening confidence, mistaking feeling for principle, being ignorant of what was in him, exclaims, Thou shalt not be scandalized in me, I will not. Such, alas! is the deceitful language of the old Adam. He, who had so often

rebuked, and who, with the sons of Zebedee, may have provoked at the table a strife for pre-eminence that called forth the mournful announcement, "One of you shall betray me," has not yet learned what the woman had who sat at the feet of Jesus. He knows not the one thing needful. Blinded by a carnal devotion, laudable, it may be, in the eyes of men, yet being in principle not better than that which possessed the betrayer,—he says, though all—all for whom Christ died, all who were to partake of that sacramental feast—though all might betray or deny thee, I will not. Can there be in the eyes of him, who sees not as man sees, a more painful exhibition of the old Adam? Judas exhibits him in his true character. Peter, as the greatest of hypocrites. Such are all they who are loudest in their love to Christ, yet part with their birthright for a mess of pottage. The Lord Jesus is made sin for man, even as the false prophet wounded in the house of his friends. Oh! how truly is he here identified with two, as he afterwards is crucified between two. Thus, then, Judas and Peter distinctly represent sin, in the uncrucified heart, ever betraying and denying Christ. But, withal, what do we see in the individual men themselves? What is there revealed? We behold the Christ in oneness with man in sin, then suffering the wrath of God against sin, and the mighty deliverance of which the resurrection of all men is the witness. But what do we see in these men as the two great types of men in relation to the truth? Judas is he who buries the one talent, ever regarding the outward dealings and providences of God as against him. He looks upon God as a hard Master. He is a cold, calculating, selfish, hard-hearted wordling, who can hide from the eyes of others his sinister and selfish designs, as under the guise of a laudable consideration for the necessities of the poor. The life of such was in remorse. But what in the other?—an impulsive gushing nature, a large heart, one that is ever his own enemy, and whose faults are not hid, but are read as clearly outwardly as inwardly. Such an one ends in repentance—a putting off a suffering in the flesh, and so a forsaking of a ceasing from sin. And so two such are brought to the cross, to die with Christ—one on the right hand and the other on the left, and we read with what result.

How hard is the lesson which every man has to learn! This lesson is *to know sin*. All his life long he is learning this lesson;

and well for him if he does, that he may know how to deal with sin, and spare it not. He has to fight it, to overcome, and occupy, and this till Christ comes. But who shall do any of these, if he knows not his adversary? It is of no use to say, "man can do this in his own strength." Such platitudes become the shibboleths of party. So long as he is in his own strength never knows sin. Sin lies within in undisturbed security. If sin puts forth his bidding in desire, or man is called or suffers for the name of Christ, Christ is betrayed or denied. Let him consider what it is to be dead with Christ, to put off the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, then will be made acquainted with the power of sin—a power that works in all subtilty and deceivableness. Then will he be ready to suffer in the flesh, because in Christ he has ceased from sin, and in him he fights, overcomes, and occupies. Peter as yet knew not sin, therefore sin yet dwelt within undisturbed. And so he exclaims, Though all shall be offended in thee, I will not be offended. He understood not the prophecy, with all its gray detail. He understood not why the Shepherd would be smitten, he understood not how he would be identified with sin, in all its terrible working, among those, even, who were called out to witness to the King of the whole earth. And so he would not; he could not, understand how Jehovah, in all his holy character, came forth as against his fellow. Two kingdoms, two powers thus stand forth antagonistic. How shall he, then, until he *understood* in himself one power find the other? Satan, in all his terrible power in our hearts, is not disturbed by man. He would say, Jesus I know, Paul I know, but who are you? Christ alone, the stronger Man, disturbs him. Men are deceived by the devil who, in them, speaks as Peter did—Though all be offended in thee, I will not. His words again prove, as they did before, how that he *savoured* of the things only that be of man. They were more odious to the Redeemer, than the cruel betrayal by Judas. They were, indeed, the abomination that maketh desolate. Peter ought to have known that he would deny his Lord, that the Adam is, and will be, and must be, offended in him, and therefore must be put off, for it can never be made better.

34. Are we not then prepared for the Lord's answer? Do not anticipate it? Should we not, taking the Lord's ground,

the same thing even to our own selves? I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Why does the blessed Redeemer here speak of a *thrice* denial? Simply because of his experience thrice in the garden of Gethsemane. The one is co-extensive with the other. In the one we have the unveiling of *man* with his loudest profession. In the other, the simple experience of him who is in Christ. The denial of Peter was no fall, as many call it. The condition of his heart showed that. He had yet no idea of "suffering in the flesh." He had not learned Christ. Peter himself intimates this, even by Mark recording the word of Jesus, as calling him Simon. (Mark xiv. 37.) The Lord has distinctly taught that he that is not with him is against him, and no man *is with him* till he has put off the old man altogether. Therefore since Peter yet *savoured* of the things which be of man, *he was* in the lowest degradation, as the denial of the Redeemer shows.

35. Peter, as he no more understood the mercy of God, and the exceeding great reward—the penny; now no more understands sin than after the resurrection he understood the love of God, the operating principle of the divine nature, the true *αγαπη*, concerning which he was thrice challenged. Let us fail to know sin within, to know the necessity of Christ crucified, and then let us be circumstanced as Peter was, and we may express ourselves as he did—"Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." The very words of Peter show that he was concerned only with the outward and visible. Did he understand the prophecy? Did he understand the baptism of fire, under the holy sword of Jehovah, through which his Master had to pass? But he did pass through it, and all men passed through it in Christ. And every man now is called upon to make effective the truth; for as Peter afterwards wrote, He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin: and so Paul (Col. i. 23).

Likewise said all the disciples. It may be said, Is there anything more that Peter could say as attesting his own resolution to stand by the Lord in the dark hour of his trial? In the honesty of his intentions he may have been persuaded, yea resolved, to do what he would dare whisper within others could not do. But how different is the resolution of him who has learned Christ! He has no confidence in the flesh, but finds when all is weakness

then is he strong, for he does all things through Christ, who *him*, strengthens him.

38. Jesus now comes to Gethsemane, and commands his disciples to be seated, while he went yonder to pray. Has he not to pray? Or is he not revealing the truth, how that in man prays, so that it is not sufficient for any man to say, "I can do nothing in my own strength, but I possess Christ," for Christ must wrestle, must fight, must agonize, yea, must pray with each and every one of us against all the power of the enemy. They all had accompanied him, but he takes with him, only, Peter, James, and John. Why these three? It is said, because they were the flower of the Apostolic band. Have they not distinguished themselves rather by their strifes for pre-eminence? Glowing sentiments do not lead us into the stern realities of truth before us. While the twelve represent all men redeemed, yet it is said that but one fourth part present the good ground for the true seed. However, the Lord is teaching us by what he is doing. He is teaching us what is the truth of God, whether obeyed or not. These three were indeed permitted to see the raising of Jairus' daughter, to be with the Lord on the mountain so to see the resurrection life and the excellent glory. Yet, with all this, were they true disciples? They had seen the truths which they, as disciples, and by their distinctive privileges, as three, should testify; but to attain to these glorious realities themselves, it is indispensable that they first know sin, know in themselves, in all its malignity and hostility to the truth, know what it is to *agonize the good agony* of faith, in order to hold on eternal life; for until they know how to overcome in the power of the mighty hand of Jehovah, they cannot know true life, they cannot partake of the true glory. They learn it only as it is seen in Gethsemane—that when the enemy comes in like a flood, they must lift up the standard of Jehovah against him, for we overcome, *striving against sin*, resisting with blood.

Jesus is exceeding sorrowful, and very heavy. He is oppressed with a painful sense of desolation and forlornness. He is not sin for us, and is in the likeness of sinful flesh, and so he has the fearful experience of *sin*. He learns the reality of that which possesses every man, and of which every man loves to be kept

a stupifying ignorance ; when at last he is awakened, but too late, to the stern realities of his condition. The Holy One is now made sin, and experiences the hiding of the Father's countenance, which he had unceasingly enjoyed in a past eternity, and of the withdrawal of which he is now painfully conscious.

In the threefold assault at the beginning of his ministry, it was the faith of a redeemed Christian man attesting redemption, and the gift of the Holy Ghost triumphing over all that was in the world ; but here it is a fearful contact with sin ; his entering into the condition of all men ; and in the hiding of the Father's countenance, sin comes forth in all its strength. He is now being wounded *in the house* of his friends ; for he is one with all men oppressed with the devil. Yet his God continueth holy, and because he is the Son, there is a mighty conflict, a fearful agony, and he resists unto blood striving against sin.

He has a warfare to accomplish, a baptism to be baptized with. He has to put away sin, and he cannot do this without entering into the condition of all that which essentially constitutes it. He, who knew no sin, who had never been or could be convinced of the slightest departure from the never-failing law of the Spirit of life, is now made sin for us that we might be made the *righteousness* of God in him.

38. He cries, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death—not mortal death, such as Peter expected, but death in its truest form. It is not “my flesh,” nor “my spirit,” but “my soul.” It is his human soul that is exceeding sorrowful even unto death. He has an awful consciousness of sin in all its terrible reality. He is in himself made sin, even as we are through him made the righteousness of God. The soul of every man is a receptivity, either of that which is of the flesh, or of God. When the flesh—the old Adam—is crucified, the soul is in its widowhood, to be united to him who died and rose again, that it might bring forth unto God. But the pure and spotless soul of the Redeemer was ever filled with his own divine Sonship, but now the proximity of sin is to him a burden, as it never can be felt by us. Who can contemplate the awful oppressive burden, yea, sin itself, as he did? It was, indeed, to him the birth pangs of death—the second death, which now laid hold of him, and he could not escape. The floods of iniquity, in the striking imagery of the

Psalmist, now rush in, making him afraid. The pangs of now encircle him, and in his distress, in this fearful and oppressive bondage, he calls unto Jehovah his Elohim. And he delivers him out of his temple. He fought for him, and delivered him from his strong enemy. This prediction of the Psalmist fulfilled on the cross. But in this foretaste the Lord "learns obedience by what he suffered." He also exhibits faith as the substance of things hoped for—that same faith had been the possession of God's worthies from the beginning; they experimentally testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow, for the Spirit of Christ was in them. (1 Pet. i. 11.) We are, then, like that cloud of witnesses to lay aside every weight and *sin* which doth so easily beset us. We are to agonize, even as the Lord did, with patient agony set before us—looking not to these worthies, not to a cloud of witnesses, for our example, but to Jesus, who is the author and finisher of our faith. It begins with him, it ends with him. As the Christ he is the author, as the Son of God he is the finisher. Thus is he the substance, as we are reminded of by an expressive reference to these appellations respectively; as Christ he endured the cross and despised the shame, and as the Son, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. We are exhorted, then, to look unto him, that we, possessing the same substance, may know how to agonize against *sin*, even unto blood.

He exhorts them to remain and watch *with him*. Does he then, in this terrible conflict with principalities, powers, and spiritual wickedness, need the arm of flesh? Does he look for consolation from man? Does he want them to die with him? Does he not rather desire that every man should watch, pressing him who does watch, and so with him. Our wills are to be united, and we must merge them in the truth. This exhortation to watch is grounded on his oneness with man. Is he pressed with a burden of sin? with a sense of separation from all that is holy and true? with a consciousness that sin is striving to destroy the relation of the Son to the Father? Surely all that he is now passing through corroborates this. Does he not reveal *sin*—the fearful monster that the old Adam loved to embrace? But he would that all men possessed him, and in

overcome and occupy till he comes the second time *without sin* unto salvation. There is here no overweening confidence, no looking without and comparing himself with others. He has a true realisation of sin, a real foretaste of the cross. He maintains, in the very midst of his agony, his filial relation in all its integrity, and, in the power of it, triumphs over evil. Falling on his face he prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. He loathed sin, yet he could say, not as I will, but as thou wilt.

The cup is often used for the expressive imagery of pouring out and drinking. It may be a cup of bitterness, or a cup of blessing. Both are poured out—that of wrath against sin; this of divine life filling the soul with spiritual blessings. Jehovah administers both cups—a cup of fury and of trembling. He will pour it out and make the wicked drink it to the very dregs. (Ps. lxxv. 8.) But it is within the power of any to awake and sing praises to the God of Jacob.

Again, thus saith Jehovah of Hosts, the Elohim of Israel; Drink ye and be drunk, and spue, and fall, and rise no more, because of the sword which I shall send among you. (Jer. xxv. 15, 16.) This cup the Lord had to drink. He drank it for all men. And the sword of Jehovah slays the enmity. The Lord Jesus, then, was here identified with all that worked in Peter and Judas, but as it was a visible testimony to what would be on the cross, so is every man to bear his testimony and cease from sin.

To explain the Lord's sufferings by human suffering is to miss the important teaching of Gethsemane. Confused ideas of his sufferings abound, arising in the main from the error of taking the ground of human suffering instead of the *revelation* of the Word. Afflictions, so called, oftentimes arise from circumstances;—we create artificial wants by ambition, position, pleasure, self-indulgence; and the deprivation or diminution of any of them results in not only physical, but oftentimes mental suffering. There is, however, another and distinct sphere of suffering affliction, in the loss of beloved objects of affection, and the severance of the ties of love which the Almighty, in his mercy, has vouchsafed us; also in sickness, disease, and the calamities incidental to this life. The cherished relations of life, while expressive of higher and holier ones, yet remind us by their severance through

death that they are not the real and the true which we possess even now, and for which we should cheerfully suffer all. However, there is another kind of suffering which goes down into the deepest depths of our moral being; it is that a deep sense of a power within us striving to destroy the true and holy relations of eternity; for they who take upon the yoke of Christ learn of him—learn in the Son, who, in revealing the Father that they may know him. Such then is the suffering of Christ—not physical, nor mental, but spiritual—was a suffering in his soul, which, though filled with the love of the Father, without measure, maintaining the filial relation in the revelation of the Father, was brought under the power and dominion of darkness and death, so that darkness was creeping over it, obscuring the light of the Father's countenance, hence the mighty conflict and a resistance even unto blood.

40. Jesus now comes to his disciples, and finds them sleeping. They are all three as the foolish virgins, having no oil in their vessels. Instead, then, of watching they are asleep. Such an unfaithful servant. Jesus, at his coming, will find him unfaithful and this because he is not watching. Be faithful, and the Lord will hate you. Tell it of its own generation. Show it its own face in the Word of God as in a mirror, and it will look at it with utmost indifference. The fact is before us, that whatever the outward circumstances, calling, position of men, be it all that the world can confer, rather than fight, agonize, overcome, and so on, till Christ comes, men give themselves up to death, even to a second death, of which this sleeping is the sign, and at last upon a fearful inheritance of woe.

The Lord, in his coming, specially mentions Peter, who would distinguish himself from his fellow-men. He rebukes him saying, What! could ye not watch with me one hour? I am with you, and can ye not be one with me one hour? He would never deny the Lord now cannot watch one hour, when the powers of darkness are in martial array against the Joshua and all Israel. The attitude of Satan is here changed. Before, he would not have Christ die (chap. xvi. 22). Now he will die with him. And here he is blinded by the god of this world, by an outward death. Whereas the truth taught him he afterwards wrote, that the prophets of old were partake

the Spirit of Christ, and did testify in him to the suffering and the glory which should follow.

41. *Watch and pray*, that ye enter not into temptation. Let us not deceive ourselves, saying, How can we watch as the Lord shows; are we to go through all the terrible reality of his sufferings? How are men to watch and pray so that they escape temptation? Did not the Lord watch? did he not pray? was he not tempted? Yes; but he entered not *into* temptation; he opposed it. The Lord surely could not tell them to pray that they *come* not into temptation, for the Spirit leads the Christian to be tempted; but that you come not *into*—here *εἰς* is most emphatic—temptation, but resist it even unto blood. The way to the crown is through the cross, by suffering in the flesh, not for the lying vanities of this life, but in fighting against them, and all that is not of the Father.

Men may, in the perfect providence of God, fall into divers temptations, but this is not entering *into* temptation. We are partakers of a sinful and depraved nature, which, in one sense, we shall not part with till the hour of death. But we can now, and do, in Christ, put it off; for if he be in us the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness; and if we have not this Spirit of Christ we are none of his. Of this condition, then, of being dead with Christ, and of being alive in his Spirit, watching and prayer are the outward expressions. To watch, then, is to hold fast this condition of death to sin. If we do not, sin revives and we die—the bitter root springs up and we are defiled, we are no longer in Christ. If we watch we shall pray; being in Christ we have his Spirit, of which prayer is the expression. Watching and prayer, then, stand in the closest connexion with an indwelling Christ and the Spirit respectively, as the fruit does to the inner sap of the tree.

It would be an absurdity to tell a man to watch and pray, without regard to the condition necessary in order to do so. God does not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles. How can any man, under the power of evil, watch against it? Again and again is he taught, “Except ye carry my cross ye cannot be my disciple.”

If, then, we know what it is to watch and pray, we know that we possess those inward realities which are expressed by watch-

fulness and prayer, and so we enter not *into* temptation making effective the indwelling grace of God, and we must at all times and under all circumstances, we escape the snare of the devil. If, then, we watch and pray, we are not in the flesh but in the Spirit. But if we enter *into* temptation, it is because we cease to watch, we lay aside *the yoke of Christ* and wallow in the flesh; for God in us, the divine life in us, cannot be the author of evil; neither tempteth he any man; but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Satan in ten thousand forms entices, the creature entices, so quicken the desire in the old Adam nature, and when it conceives it brings forth sin; it brings forth after its own nature—sin brings forth sin—so lust is sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death—spiritual death. (Jas. i. 13, 14.) The old Adam nature and the Spirit lust, and these are contrary; the former lusts for created things, the latter for the uncreated. If, then, we do the will of the flesh we die, but if we, through the Spirit, do the will of the Father, we live. (Rom. viii. 13.) Therefore when the Lord enjoined the obligation to watch and pray, it was to maintain in all the fearful assaults of evil our adoption as sons in the knowledge of the Father.

The Spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak. Power and strength lay in the flesh. How different was that of the woman it was in her King. The flesh is not essentially evil, but sin dwells in it. And when redeemed, even in its best state, is powerless against evil: but the Spirit is willing. Thus, the Lord Jesus we should watch and pray; and, since the condition is the birthright of all, and the Spirit is willing, then all should do so, else they despise the marvellously condescending love of the Spirit, and the honour and dignity of being a vessel unto the Lord.

43. The Lord Jesus again comes and finds them asleep. This simply represent the truth, that they look not below the letter of their Master's words. They may say he has the word of eternal life, but what is that, if they are yet strangers to life? They are in a condition the very opposite of that which the Lord, by word and example, has been all along teaching and enforcing. They hide the one talent.

44. He again pours out his soul in prayer.

45. Doubtless the Lord saw what a fearful night and day was now before him, and that his disciples would be scattered, and so he would that they should sleep and take their rest. But they had none, for they immediately arose. However, the mystic signification, which is for all men, is all-important. The Lord had been tempted. He could be so only as he was made sin; and here we are taught that while the temptations of Satan are not incessant, yet we must watch, and after this faithful watching there is rest.

The twelve represented a redeemed world; of them the three were—but *outwardly* only—*pre-eminently* his disciples. They had been taught of him. They had been *with him* at Gethsemane. And now we regard them as having watched, and it is said unto them, "Sleep on now, and take your rest." So the Psalmist writes, It would be vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows, *when to his beloved* he giveth sleep. This sleep is rest for toil. It would be vain to look for this by any work of the flesh. It is a gift of God in Christ Jesus. After the dark night of suffering temptation, the soul finds in the morning dawn its true rest—a refreshment from the presence of the Lord. All are invited to take the yoke of Christ upon them, and to learn of him, and, in the knowledge of the Father, they shall find rest for their souls. Thus, in the dark and mysterious ways of God, though the waters roar and be troubled, and the mountains shake with the swelling thereof, there is a rest, and watching leads to it.

The hour is near—the hour for which he came—the hour when he shall tread the wine-press of the wrath of God, and no man with him—the hour, of which that in the garden was the prelude, when the mystery hid from ages shall be revealed, to which holy men of old looked forward—the hour when the Son of man shall be glorified in casting out the prince of this world, redeeming man and revealing the Father.

46. The Lord has taught the necessity of watching, that we may enter into rest. But here is now a painful instance in contrast, not with Peter, but with her who anointed Jesus as her King. She takes his yoke and finds rest for her soul. But Judas, and he *one of the twelve*, betrays him into the hands of sinners. He takes not the yoke, and finds not the rest, which a God of peace alone

can give. Judas comes with great multitudes with swords and staves, from the high priests and elders of the people. Can anything more clearly express their condition of spiritual blindness and malignant hostility? On the one hand, we see Jesus armed with *carnal* weapons, but, clothed in the panoply of God, overcoming principalities, powers, the rulers of darkness, and all wickedness in high places; on the other, the professing servants of God, and even disciples, armed with *carnal* weapons—to fight against him, and some for him. What is such Christianity worth that needs the arm of flesh? Christ's kingdom is not of this world, nor is it served from any such an arm (Eph. vi. 11, 12.)

48. Judas gives a sign. Of what? Of union—of communion with Christ. It is possible, then, to find among the true profession of love to Christ, yet of oneness with the abomination of desolation. The Lord has taught what it is to be one with him to watch and to pray, and so to resist unto blood, and against sin, and that not to do so is death—spiritual death. Here we are taught what it is to be one with the enemies of Christ. The Christianity of the day kisses Christ, while it betrays him for the wedge of gold and Babylonish garment. There may be that education and position can give—a love for the ordinary righteousness, a delight in approaching God, an approval of things excellent as from the Word of God itself—yet much is conspiring against Christ, a selling him for the thirty pieces of silver. It is not for us to point the finger at Judas as he can be shunned with abhorrence, but to look within ourselves, we shall find a betrayer ready to prostitute the soul to the devil for a few pieces of silver. Wherefore, unless we possess Christ reigning within, over every thought, word, and action, enthroned in the heart, bringing all into captivity and obedience to him, we may read ourselves in the Judas that betrayed his Lord. *the sign* of the holiest and truest blessing—oneness with God.

49. Many other things which the other Evangelists record here omitted. Matthew deems what is here as sufficient to convey the spiritual truths before him in their integrity. We need therefore, to supplement from others in order to explain his

Judas, then, approaches the sacred person of the Lord, exclaiming, Hail! Master, and kissed him. The callous, obdurate

senseless folly of this wretched man is but the outcoming of the evil within. He had told them to hold him fast. It is evident, then, that he did not calculate upon the consequences of his act—for he had heard the Lord say, No man taketh my life from me, for I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again—and so may have entertained the idea that he would deliver himself. But, like the rest, he heeded not the spiritual import of his Master's words.

Here we see sin in all its unblushing effrontery—a disciple betraying his Lord, even while kissing him, for a few pieces of silver. Can sin go beyond this? However, Christ, as faithful to his ministry, strives with him to arouse him to a better mind—to pluck him as a brand from the burning. So are we taught that we should so watch for souls, and not sit in judgment where God has not. And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? In this compellation we see nothing ominous. It is an expression consistent with that calm and imperturbable majesty exhibited in Jesus, and of his unchanging love for man. In this compellation does he not bring before Judas even the prophecy he had addressed to Peter. He is, indeed, wounded in the house of his friends; not, indeed, with carnal weapons, but he is made one with sin. Judas may give the kiss and betray, but it is to One who, notwithstanding the painfully degraded and debased condition of the betrayer, is yet the Friend of man, who is come to destroy the works of the devil, *be they what they may*.

51. Another incident is now introduced pregnant with meaning. We have seen our depraved nature in its true character, professing to be one with Christ, yet betraying him into the hands of his enemies. We now see in another form how that same nature, in its best estate fighting for Christ, is weak against the powers of evil. One of them, Peter, his name is omitted by the earlier Evangelist, because, as some think, the servant, if yet alive, would avenge his injury if he were to know who it was that smote him. This idea can scarcely be the right explanation after so long a time. It is rather for the sake of the truth, in its universal tendency, that Matthew omits to name any one. The Lord regards not any specially. He has spoken of the flesh generally that it is weak. The Lord fights not with man, not with flesh and blood, therefore he

does not resist, and they take him. But Peter, a stranger indwelling Christ, the Son of God, fights. This is all that flesh can do. And, in the use of such weapons, man, for every nature of things, is ensuring his own destruction. He is the slave of that from which he imagines himself free. He proves his devotion by raising his sword against his fellow. He has not yet learned in the garden how the *sword of* was against the Shepherd—the man, his fellow, to deliver and through him all mankind, from the evil that dwells. Peter wields not the sword of Jehovah against evil, but his own sword against that which is to be delivered from evil. He indeed, thought that all was right. He saw not that his he was one with that of Judas, as his subsequent conduct proved. The cause of God is never served by carnal weapons, nor will the work of man ever work the righteousness of God. Therefore is he commanded to put up his sword in his place, for all that take the sword perish with it. They, then, who use such in the great battle of life, which must be fought by all, *will perish with them*. The conflict is for all, but woe be to him that maketh flesh his friend and departeth from the Lord. In this warfare *no creature will avail*. The arm of Jehovah alone has wrought for man, and continues to do so.

52. The conflict, then, is not visible. They were to watch Christ, and so not to fight *without him*. Had he need of created power he would not have looked to twelve men, but to his Father, who would have given him twelve legions of angels who would, as hereafter they will, put away all that offend and maketh a lie. Peter is still ignorant how that he, as he is, who savour not of the things which be of God, but those which be of man, *are an offence* unto Christ. But Jesus is come to deliver man.

54. These men, as representing most truly the abominations that maketh and will make desolate, come with carnal weapons. They come in all the power of the flesh. Instead of being in the soul one with Christ, they are, in the flesh, one with sin. Instead of being in the last Adam in the power of a quickening Spirit, they come in all the power and deceitfulness of the first. Such things must be, else how shall the Scriptures be fulfilled? The warfare of Jesus is a spiritual warfare; it is a mighty

unceasing conflict with the powers of darkness. Are ye, he says, come out as against a robber with swords and staves to take me? He was no stormy zealot provoking the people to insurrection. He did not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets. But if they had been truly robbed and spoiled, it was not by him, for he sat daily with them, teaching in the temple, and they laid no hold upon him. He had fulfilled his ministry—of this they were convinced—but they, and the whole nation, had not the least conception of the spiritual nature of his teaching.

56. The Scriptures are fulfilled; he is a stranger to his brethren, an alien to his mother's children; his lovers and his friends stand aloof from his stroke, and his kinsmen stand afar off. They, also, that seek after his life laid snares for him. He was esteemed stricken, wounded of God, afflicted. The realities which gave meaning and significance to the shadows going before, were about to have their accomplishment in him, who was the fellow of Jehovah of Hosts. All his disciples forsook him and fled. But had they identified themselves with their Master the same thing would have awaited them, as the experience of all *in whom* the unchanging truths of Christ's religion find expression. Whilst he bears about him the marks of his suffering, he is a stranger to his brethren, an alien to his mother's children, and his lovers and his friends stand aloof, and his kinsmen stand afar off.

57. Two incidents are briefly mentioned. And here we cannot fail to recognise the two representatives of all that is outward and visible, and will pass away. Of the one the high priests, scribes, and the elders; of the other there is the foremost of that little band called the disciples of the Lord, and who is said to be, by the greater portion of Christendom, the head, if not the foundation, of the Christian church. The former are awaiting the arrival of their august prisoner. Sad, indeed, is the picture. These men, professing all that is excellent in the law of God, and making their boast of him, are yet enslaved. They know not redemption, and so are impelled to the commission of the most diabolical and iniquitous act in bitter hatred to the humblest and meekest of men. Their Scriptures, which they hold with all devotion as the oracles of God, they blindly trample under foot. The rising of a convicted conscience they smother, because the

cross, which their Scriptures teach as the only way of h of union with God, was to them a stone of stumbling rock of offence. While the latter presents the abjection of one destitute of every particle of moral courage, cringing the most cringing cowardice, when he had so loudly pr his love to Christ, and boastfully declared he would deny him. He shrinks from the cross, the trial of hi which is more precious than gold and silver that pe though it be tried by fire, that it might be unto praise and and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. The one pai in their traditions, the other in fair words and promises. profess religion—both are destitute of it. And so it n asked, What is the value of all this mere outward religion in Church membership consists? What will it be worth w searching hour comes, as assuredly it will come? We are to carry the cross, to take upon ourselves the yoke of Chris like a refiner's fire and fuller's soap, it may not only purg all our dross, but wash us white, that we may offer to the L offering in righteousness; but if we are found only like following *afar off*, ashamed of the cross, so identified wi enemies of the Lord, looking for results instead of essenti eternal principles, of judgment and of righteousness, what we expect?

From the moment that the Lord was taken, the momen he became under the power of the world, *the sceptre passer Judah*, and all, then, that was external, as witnessing t sceptre, passed away.

59. The Jewish hierarchy are now assembled, persecuting unrelenting hatred, him to whom their Scriptures unmistak point as their Christ. And in this painful scene we behol who professed to be his faithful, his greatest friend, hiding h among the servants, purposing to see the end, when, in hea had denied him. The Jewish priests seek false witness. know they cannot effect their cruel purpose but with false mony. Truly they were of their father the devil.

60. Plenty of false witnesses came, but they found none— is, they did not find two, who, according to their law, must in their allegations. At last came two, who alleged that he s am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three

These were not his words. And to this false statement the Lord did not condescend a reply.—Appendix (G).

62. The statement is untrue, and they know it. Their conduct shows it. Perplexed at the calm majesty and undisturbed tranquillity of the blessed Redeemer, who in nowise helped them to override all that was right and just, the high priest says to him, Answerest thou nothing? What is it these witness against thee? He reads their wicked hearts. He sees them rejecting the cross, trampling under foot the blood of the everlasting covenant, and he kept silence. His faithful testimony is recorded in imperishable truth? Then, shall the servant be greater than his Lord? It will be well if he be as his Master. Then, if they have spoken against his Lord, so will they against the servant. Let us be faithful unto death. Let us bear our testimony against a world, despite it—a world lying in the wicked one. No man bears a testimony to the cross of Christ without calling out the bitter, lying, and unrelenting hostility of sin.

63. Now the high priest adjures him. He puts him to the oath to tell him whether he be the Christ, the Son of the living God. Where did he get this formula? It was a fearful testimony against them, as, in respect of these names, that suborned false witnesses. They understood, then, the question, What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is he?

Peter had uttered this confession, but was it a true confession? Though he was blessed of the Father, did he in truth give expression to a reality possessed? The Lord's words show that, though grace abounded to him, he had not yet made it his own, possessed it. Christ is the Son not only of the true David, but also of the true Abraham.

The Scripture testified before that he would be a root out of a dry ground, without form or comeliness, and there was no beauty that he should be desired, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. They despised and rejected him, and even his friends hid their faces from him. Nevertheless, the truth sustained him, and they now put the question in the most solemn form, Whether he was Messiah of whom the Scriptures testified. The Lord replied, "Thou hast said." "Thou hast said the very thing that I am." The truth is thus affirmed *on oath*. It is the form in which the oath was administered, and the Lord declares on oath who he

was. As the Christ, then, he is come, not indeed, as son to pay a penalty to satisfy the justice of God—for the Son knows not such a word as *justice* of God—but to die *once*. He is made sin; he feels its power, its dominion, enters death. But, in death, dying to sin, he rolls away burden, and with it its power and dominion, and so redeems world, that men might awake from the sleep of death, and, Spirit of the true Son, of the true Abraham, the Father multitude, he might bless all for whom he died. The Lord added words which must have gone down into their hearts words of power attesting the true Melchizedek, and came to arrest them in their diabolical purpose, and deliver them from the bondage of death, the chains of which they were forging themselves. Nevertheless, since he is not man, but the One, Jehovah of Hosts, the Redeemer of Israel, he now, on the cross, that, despite the malignant working of Satan, he deliver all, and so these, from the thralldom of his power.

So long as men disregard the convictions of conscience continue in a perverse course, the Lord holds his peace. At the moment they come in the way of truth enquiring of him he vouchsafes not only an answer, but abundantly more than can expect. He, when they had banished their mutual animities, and conspired to entrap him, even then asked them, 'think ye of Christ? Whose Son is he? And, Why did I call him Lord? Now, they had rightly interpreted him, and the Lord himself confirms it by an oath, and by a reference to the same Psalm. Yet these men, utterly perverse, and despite Scriptures and their manifest fulfilment in the works he wrought override and disregard everything that would maintain supremacy.

65. Outwardly righteous overmuch, they would, rending garments, declare God dishonoured, and adjudge the Lord guilty of blasphemy. Mocking the majesty of justice, they would say they have no need of further witnesses. Miserable time-serving bigots, blind to the truth and to the claims of sheer humanity, they think themselves right, and that they are serving God when they accomplish their end even by the most iniquitous means.

66. They pronounce Jesus guilty of death. In all they show a zeal, but it is not according to knowledge. However firm

their zeal, or right their interpretation of the words of Jesus, they are, in their hearts, only enmity to all that is holy, righteous, and good. It would be a grievous blunder to suppose that the same enmity to the truth, though mixed with zeal for the letter of Scripture, does not now exist. To point to these Jews, and to imagine that we ourselves, influenced by the same indwelling evil, and outward circumstances, brought up and nurtured in the same predilections, habits, and associations, would not do the same, is to miss the testimony of the Word of God.

67, 68. It may be asked, Why does the Lord calmly submit to these indignities? Can such things be in the providence of God? It would be no extenuation to say that these men acted under the conviction that Jesus was a blasphemer. But we see simply human nature as it is blinded by the god of this world. We behold the vindictive maliciousness of evil, and how it pursues its hostile course, notwithstanding the clearest prophetic announcement of its true character;—"I gave myself to the smiters, and my cheek to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting, and this because Jehovah Elohim hath opened my ear." It was the sign of slavery, of bondage, in which he was when made sin for us. And so Jehovah asks, Is my hand shortened that I cannot redeem? or, Have I not power to deliver? In this servitude the lowly Jesus, despite the contumely, reproach, and bitter experience, allows nothing to prevent him fulfilling his Father's will; and so must the law of his Spirit in any one so express itself. However, the conduct of these men towards him was nothing to the indignity and suffering of Gethsemane and Calvary, where he was made sin for all men, that all might be the righteousness of God in him.

Could any one read his own heart, and understand how evil does possess it, how it debases and degrades him, he would patiently endure the wrong-doing of others, rather than provoke them to further wrong-doing. However, the wickedness of the human heart against the meek and lowly One is here revealed. Nothing else can explain the folly and madness of these revilers, as they fulfil prophecy after prophecy, heaping indignity upon indignity upon the august One before them, as they exclaimed, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?

69. Peter sat without in the palace. Did he see it all?

Doubtless he did, for he came to see the end. When the Lord was adjured by the high priest to say whether he was the Christ, the Son of the living God, did he hear it? and if so, did he remember his own confession? Then, where was his manly indignation? where was his partaking of his Lord's reproach? Now a young woman challenges him with being one of his disciples. But he pleads an utter ignorance of all she was speaking about. In this crafty expression of the lie he appears to have quenched every spark of true sympathy. He may honour his Lord with his lips, but where is his heart? He, who would stand out before all men, and die with his Lord, rather than deny him, proclaims himself an utter stranger to him, and denies that he ever had any knowledge of him.

71. When he had shifted his position, and gone out into the porch, for he had been within the palace to see the end, and so cowardly slinks away, another maid sees him, and says unto them that were there, "This man was also with Jesus of Nazareth;" but he denied with an oath, "I know not the man." It will not be out of place here to remark, that in the various records of this second denial, different persons are said to challenge Peter. This might be explained by supposing three came out together into the porch where he was—a man and two women—one of them she who first challenged him—and that all, seeing him, spoke, at one and the same time, the same thing.

73. He is again challenged. His dialect is that of Galilee. He is a true fisherman. An old habit shows itself in oaths, cursing, and swearing—they come forth in all their strength, which even the sacred name of Jesus does not restrain, for he denies him. The Bible gives us true pictures of life, of what is within, and why, and how it comes forth exhibiting itself. In this true record of the man, what are his outward privileges worth? They were great privileges. He had a distinguished call; he made a true confession; he was sent forth to preach the kingdom; he made ready the passover; and now, when called to take up his cross and follow his Lord, he denies him in all the *characteristics of his old Adam nature*. Wherein could he see himself different from the betrayer? Test him in any one of his distinguished privileges, and what is there lacking? In his call, his confession, his preaching, his ministering at the paschal feast,

is there not the one thing needful—the cross of Christ a practical reality, which puts off the old Adam—lacking? Here we have the picture of the unfaithful servant at his Lord's coming. Men confess a call, confess Christ, the Son of the living God, preach "the Word," and minister of the Eucharist, but when the *cross comes to them individually, and personally, and demands a practical testimony*, so that, inwardly, in the unseen depths of their own heart before God, there be a perfect self-denial, they deny it, and shift their position, finding it irksome, and so allow the stirring conviction imperceptibly to glide away, perhaps never to return as before. Here, then, they may in this miserable denial of the Lord read themselves, for their own self-complacency will re-assert itself, not perhaps in the gross form of swearing and cursing, but in its own characteristic features.

Peter's thrice denial of Christ stands in painful contrast with him who resists unto blood striving against sin, *and so* thrice confesses the will of God; for what Christ was in Gethsemane, he should be in every man: even, as he was in her who anointed him for his burial. She was not ashamed of the cross, for her anointing was not only love going before, but a glorying in the cross.

Peter went out and wept bitterly. This is not repentance, much less conversion. Both imply a change of mind and heart. The former respects that from which we turn, a sorrow because *of sin*; the latter that to which we turn—we turn from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God. Repentance is the work of Christ in the heart, a renunciation of the flesh. It is a repentance not to be regretted; while conversion not only implies repentance, but is a turning to God to the possession of the divine life. Peter wept bitterly; it was, indeed, the outward sign of repentance and conversion, but the sign must not be confounded with the reality—a deep and abiding sorrow for sin. It is with the humble and contrite heart, where there is the humbling oneself under the mighty hand of God, and the true suffering in the flesh (1 Pet. v. 6; iv. 1), that God loves to dwell. The mighty hand of God is in the cross, which all the weeping in the world will never supply nor supplant.

So long as we are in the flesh, we are subject to the assaults of Satan. He will sift us as wheat. But if Christ be in us, our

faith will not fail. We may here, however, discover in Peter a disposition that is favourable to Christianity. It is the opposite of a hardened heart. It is the contrast of that which ends in remorse. Still Christ is not here. The Jews fought against the conviction of their own consciences, while Peter is now overwhelmed by his.

CHAPTER XXVII.

1 **WHEN** the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people
2 took counsel against Jesus to put him to death : and when they had bound
him, they led *him* away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the
governor.

3 Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was con-
demned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to
4 the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed
the innocent blood. And they said, What *is that* to us? see thou *to that*.
5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went
and hanged himself.

6 And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for
7 to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they
took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.
8 Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. Then
9 was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And
they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued,
10 whom they of the children of Israel did value ; and gave them for the
potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

11 And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying,
Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.
12 And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered
13 nothing. Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things
14 they witness against thee? And he answered him to never a word; inso-
much that the governor marvelled greatly.

15 Now at *that* feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a
16 prisoner, whom they would. And they had then a notable prisoner, called
17 Barabbas. Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto
them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is
18 called Christ? For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.

19 When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him,
saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man : for I have suffered
many things this day in a dream because of him.

20 But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should
21 ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said unto
them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said,
22 Barabbas. Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which

23 is called Christ? *They* all say unto him, Let him be crucified. And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.

24 When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but *that* rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed *his* hands before the multitude, saying
25 I am innocent of the blood of this just person : see ye *to it*. Then answered
26 all the people and said, His blood be on us, and on our children. Then released he Barabbas unto them : and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered *him* to be crucified.

27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and
28 gathered unto him the whole band *of soldiers*. And they stripped him,
29 and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put *it* upon his head, and a reed in his right hand : and they
30 bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, king of the Jews ! And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the
31 head. And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify *him*.

32 And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name :
33 him they compelled to bear his cross. And when they were come unto a
34 place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, they gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall : and when he had tasted *thereof*, he would not drink.

35 And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots : that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted *my*
36 garments among them, and upon *my* vesture did they cast lots. And
37 sitting down they watched him there ; and set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

38 Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.

39 And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying,
40 Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest *it* in three days, save thyself.
41 If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the
42 chief priests mocking *him*, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others ; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come
43 down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God ; let him deliver him now, if he will have him : for he said, I am the Son of
44 God. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli ! Eli !
lama sabachthani ? that is to say, My God ! my God ! why hast thou forsaken me ? Some of them that stood there, when they heard *that*, said,
47 This *man* calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled *it* with vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and gave him to

49 drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.

50 Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

51 And, behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the
52 bottom. And the earth did quake, and the rocks rent. And the graves
53 were opened ; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came
out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and
appeared unto many.

54 Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw
the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly,
saying, Truly, this was the Son of God.

55 And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus
56 from Galilee, ministering unto him : among which was Mary Magdalene,
and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's
children.

57 WHEN the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathæa,
58 named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple : he went to Pilate,
and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be
59 delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean
60 linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the
rock : and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and
61 departed. And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting
over against the sepulchre.

62 NOW the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief
63 priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember
that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise
64 again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the
third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away. and say
unto the people, He is risen from the dead : so the last error shall be worse
65 than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch : go your way,
66 make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure
sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

1. WHEN the morning was come, all the chief priests and
elders of the people took counsel against Jesus. They did not
consider his witnessing on oath to his own Messiahship, but how
they should put him to death.

The abomination of desolation works. God has gathered all
things into one into Christ, both which are in heaven and in
earth, even into him. He is the holy place of the true temple.
Whatever, then, takes the place of Christ is Antichrist, and
so he is as the abomination of desolation in the holy place ;

but where Christ is, there is no desolation, but the fulness of God, which is an odour of a sweet smell unto him. The high priest, and all the elders of the people, represent the abomination of desolation, which no words, works, or oath of Jesus will ever make otherwise, for the old Adam can never be made better, and, if not put off altogether, will work ; and so he now takes counsel how to put Jesus to death. Peter then represents all those who do not watch, do not resist, overcome, and occupy till the Lord comes ; and they do not, because they know not the one thing *needful*—Christ in all the simplicity of his character and works meeting the awful condition of sin in themselves. They may profess all that distinguished Peter—called to be a disciple—profess the name and person of Jesus, go forth to preach the Word, and to administer the sacraments, yet, being in the old Adam, how can they lift up a standard against the flood of iniquity ? And on the other hand, the Judases are they who, while they kiss their Master, and profess to be one with him, and to minister to the necessities of the poor, betray him for the wedge of gold, and the Babylonish garment.

2. An incident simple in itself yet very significant is now brought before us. The Truth, whether we regard the Jewish Church, the disciples, Judas, or Pilate, was a stranger or wanderer in their midst. And here we see the fulfilment of an important prophecy, which ought to have arrested the Jewish hierarchy in their evil course. It is marvellously brought about by their own act and deed, as they delivered Jesus bound to Pontius Pilate the governor. They knew full well his claim to be the Messiah, the Son of David, the Son of God, also that the sceptre should not depart Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come. His presence in their midst was a testimony that it had not departed. But it did depart when they delivered their King to the dominion of sin and death, as he died an accursed death. And although they and others might dispute this, the greater truth, yet on their own ground they did so when they, on the charge of blasphemy, surrendered a prisoner for capital punishment into the hands of the Roman power.

3. Bearing in mind that the twelve, in their theocratic number, represent the covenant possessed by all flesh—for since Christ died for all, and the Spirit is poured out upon all flesh, the

Father has fulfilled his promise—then Judas represents those who cut themselves off from the blessings vouchsafed. God is no respecter of persons. He is the Saviour of all men. All stand in the same relation to him. Judas, in his outward relation to Christ, attested this; which relation teaches what Christ has done, and continues to do, for all men—that he strives with every man, that he may appropriate and enjoy the one and the same birthright. Judas, by his conduct, clearly shows that he has within nothing common with his Master. Let us clearly understand that his act expressed the inner condition, according to which alone we all shall hereafter be judged. He had nothing common with Christ. This is the simple characteristic of the world. We ask, then, If God is the Saviour of all men, why did not this wretched man believe? Why do not others believe? Because some earthly thing, and not the cross, is the object of their cherished desire. To be carnally minded is death. To mind earthly things is to be the enemy of the cross of Christ. But if Christ be in us the body is dead, because of sin. It would be futile to say what Satan may have suggested to Judas, however plausible; or what his compunction or bitter agony afterwards was. The simple truth is, that he obeyed his uncrucified heart, and distinctly rejected the Christ, and so was the ready instrument of the devil. No outward act can condone for sin working within. David looked within as he was naked before God, and said, Against thee only have I done this evil. He gave place to the devil, and sin reigned in the heart of him who was the type of the true King of Israel. Judas had set his heart on the creature; his desire for money was the expression of what was within, and when he was told by one greater than the seer Gad, “Thou art the man,” he did not turn from the error of his way, but went forth to work the works of the devil.

It may be asked, Can any one who is of a kind, generous, hospitable, genial spirit, punctilious in the observance of the rules of modern society, considerate of the rights and claims of others, be reproached for betraying his Lord? If the flesh be not crucified, wherein is the difference between such an one and Judas? It is not consistent with truth to say, Judas is condemned because he betrayed his Lord; or because Jesus said, It were good for that man if he had not been born. The act of Judas was the out-

coming of that condition of heart which will hereafter call the same words of Jesus. Judas' conduct, then, is not to be terminated by the result, or what he expected, but rather by from which it proceeded. It is, then, to us an awful warning lest we betray our Lord. Judas does not realise sin, no terrible iniquity of his course, until too late. He had forfeited against his spiritual privileges and advantages by a supercilious indifference or disregard of them. What, then, is the difference in the bitter weeping of Peter and the remorse of Judas? The former are outward expressions. The former should indicate a repentance—a turning from, a forsaking of *sin*; the latter is a regret or remorse for *an act* of sin. That, as godly sorrow respect unto sin; this, as the sorrow of the world, has respect only unto the act. Peter may have beheld his inward self wept bitterly; Judas simply the outer act. The former leads to Christ, the latter to desperation.

We have already remarked that no necessity lay upon Judas to do this deed; more, the act of betrayal could never equal in heinousness the inward condition, the source whence it proceeded. Now, since our privileges are far greater than those of the twelve disciples, our conduct, while calling ourselves Christians, professing to be the friends of Christ, yet holding on to the things of this life, is equally culpable with that of Judas; for all, according to the use or abuse of the one talent, are sheep or goats.

4. Judas has gained the object of his ambition, but it is a tolerable burden. He would now gladly undo what he had done. He comes like Saul, crying, "I have sinned." He comes when too late. He cries to those who cannot assist him. When departing this life will sometimes look back with compunction and declare how that the past has been only a mistake. "I have made provision for the flesh to fulfil its lusts, and the bitterest wail is, "I have sinned." Life has passed like a weaver's shuttle, and all that was worth living for is gone forever.

When we consider against whom Judas had lifted his hand, against the Friend who sticketh closer than any brother, him who had placed in him unbounded confidence, and with personal love sought to lead him on to do righteousness, the vile turpitude of his act is sufficiently evident. But against whom does

sinner transgress? Is it not against him from whom every good and perfect gift cometh—the Father of lights, who has commended his love to us, in that he spared not his Son, but gave him for us all—the righteous for the unrighteous. And yet that love is spurned and despised. Judas was indeed a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, and he knew it. No man sells himself to do evil, but knows it. Yet how many are there worse even than Judas, who betray their Lord for a mess of pottage, and at the same time endeavour, not only to justify their doings, but calm their uneasy qualms by a continual quoting of religious truth?

What effect have the words and the desperation of Judas upon these bigots? Do they for one moment consider? No; religious zeal not only blinds them to what is just and true, but encourages them in their own conceits. They regard not the despairing cry of the wretched betrayer, much less him against whom they are working evil. It is, indeed, the fearful property of sin, not only to separate man from the centre of life and blessing, but, having isolated him, to drive him into himself, to find only bitter remorse, the torment of dark despair.

Whether we look on this picture or on that, we behold sin in all its fearful enormity. And it is for us to take warning thereby, for if judgment begin at the house of God, what shall be the end of them that obey not the Gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner be?

5. Judas now does what his Master never did—he enters the holy place of the temple, indicating his utter desperation, as if he would check the fruit of the workings of evil in his own heart. This cannot be; for man to undo what he has done, he must begin first with himself. But now he went out and hanged himself—a fearful representation of that more awful suicide, where men *fail* to lift up Christ crucified in their own hearts.

We here repeat, that every act in the Gospel, and so especially in the drama before us, is explained and determined, not, indeed, by our fancy or ingenuity, but by the names of the Son of David, the Son of Abraham (ch. i. 1).

Judas in his desperation seeks out the high priests and the elders of the people, and offers them the money, but they refuse; rushing then into the holy place, he throws it down there, and went forth and hanged himself. Doubtless, it was the last act

performed in the holy place, before the vail was rent in tw before the way into the holiest of all was made perfect. vail was rent, and the way was made perfect, by the death who died once unto sin; so that, through the vail of his fle enter into the very presence of God. But the holy place v more polluted by the presence of the betrayer, than it was silver, which represented the high priests and the elder abomination *that maketh desolate*. As yet the vail of the t was not rent, teaching us that even to this extent the rede mercy of God reached, for Jesus came to destroy all the wo the devil, and to set man free. Therefore there was pardon for Judas, did he but grapple with the evil within, but h sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, *and willingly* is h on to the fearful end. He here teaches us the awful warn hence the necessity of a continual watching—that, however ample, all-embracing be the salvation of God, man pe because his heart is hardened to the call of mercy, and of and so blinded by the god of this world, he passes away eternity.

6. The chief priests, for they only are in the holy place the money, and they buy the potter's field for a burial plac strangers. They fulfilled a remarkable prophecy. Let us just see how the intellect of man is prostituted to the acc thing—the flesh. These men have prophecy after prophecy cerning Jesus, but they reject him. But here they tak thirty pieces of money according to the prophecy which re ably testifies to the Christ, and they fulfil it. They buy a place for strangers, as if it was a place of *desolation and* now no longer part of the holy land, the inheritance o people of God. Such, then, is the end of all unfaithful serva they have their portion with unbelievers. As the thirty pie silver were the reward or fruit of iniquity, *ἀδικία*, so the po field, which, doubtless, received the body of Judas, “for he to his *own place*,” testified that he died a stranger to the cov of grace, an alien to the commonwealth of Israel, as he had no part in the inheritance and the kingdom of God.

9. This incident of the betrayer forms altogether a remar interlude. A mechanical fulfilment of prophecy is, wit inspired writers, quite out of the question; nor is the fulfil

limited to so much of the truth as that of the citation, which may be an unmistakeable type or shadow of the reality, the substance which forecasts its shadow, but takes in the whole subject of which the citation would be the index, as chapter and verse are now with us.

Zechariah speaks, in ch. xi., of the breaking of the covenant—of bringing to an end of that which was to be abolished, and consequently, the rupture of the brotherhood of Israel and Judah. The outward ceremonial, the outward covenant, was to be abolished. It being of God, the shadow of the true, therefore their redemption, which was as the staff Beauty, is to be broken. The Jewish nation, and all God's dealings with it, were full of expressive types. For instance, the three periods of forty years in the life of Moses, expressed the life of every Christian man. The reigning of Saul, David, and Solomon, each for forty years, corresponded to those three periods in the life of Moses respectively. From the time of Solomon, the kingdom is divided. Ten tribes form the kingdom of Israel, two that of Judah. The house of Judah is as the *house of David*; while the name of Israel would represent *the spiritual seed*, the children of the true Abraham, who possess all that Isaac, as offered up, and Jacob, as Israel, having obtained the blessing, signified. Thus, the nation, though divided, was made to teach, *despite the working of sin*, the kingdom of Christ, and of God. It attested, not only that God had not forsaken his people, but also the nature of the kingdom as, according to Melchizedek, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham—the two principles of the *everlasting* covenant. The house of Judah witnessed to the Son of David, and Israel to the spiritual seed, while the ten tribes, as the sign of totality, to the universal tendency of the truth—as the prophet writes, My covenant which I made with *all the people* (Zech. xi. 10). These two staves, the kingly power and the brotherhood attesting the Father, are now broken; so that, not only was the outward and visible done away as the rent vail testified, but the outward kingdom was now at an end, and the sceptre had departed from Judah. The thirty pieces of silver were the price of the Son of David, that was valued of the children of Israel, so they valued the very substance of all that distinguished them in the midst of men. Children of Israel! What a solemn mockery is there in those

two names, now that the staff of Beauty is broken! And where is the staff of Bands, when the Brother, born for adversity—the true Joseph, is cast out a stranger and an alien to his mother's children? They valued him as a slave; and that field of blood was a permanent witness, not only that they had cast out of Jerusalem as a slave, made sin for man, to die the ignominious death, the Son of David; but also, that since they were made desolate, *their inheritance* consisted only in that which remained to them of the thirty pieces of money.

11. Following, then, these truths revealed in the predictions of Jacob and of Zechariah, the question of Pilate is very remarkable and significant. The King, the true King of all true Jews, stands bound before the governor. According to visible things, as Christ stands bound before Pilate, the sceptre is departing from Judah. Moreover, it is spiritually true, for the Son of David is now bound, and subject to all over which he is to triumph. He is now subject to death, and death reigns.

Behold him! He stands bound in an attitude that fulfils the great predictions of the Old Testament Scriptures. And how significant is that answer graciously vouchsafed to the question of Pilate, and which Matthew records in connexion with the prophecies already referred to. Notwithstanding all he will manifest his sovereignty in abolishing death, and bringing life and immortality to light for all men. Though the sceptre shall visibly and spiritually depart from Judah, nevertheless, Judah *shall reign* in Melchizedek. He is a King, and as a King he will die. As it is written in Hosea xiii. 4, 9, &c. I am Jehovah thy Elohim from the land of Egypt, thou shalt know no Elohim but one: for there is no Saviour beside me. O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help. I will be thy King: I will ransom thee from the hand of the grave; I will redeem thee from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction. Change of purpose is hid from mine eyes.

Pilate, had he with an honest heart availed himself of the opportunity, had he improved the occasion, might have received from the lips of Jesus the whole truth. But he has no disposition to know. The substance and the shadow are face to face—the former bound, the latter free, yet not *truly* so. The high priests and elders of the people now come in the pride of Assyria

and with the sceptre of Egypt. They howl because their glory is spoiled. They accuse the Lord of many things, but they roar as young lions, for the pride of Jordan is spoiled.

Then, of what do these lofty cedars, these oaks of Bashan, accuse Jesus? Of claiming to be a King, to be the Son of God, who should die and rise again, and doubtless their fury was as wild as it was afterwards against Stephen.

13. Pilate well knew the general disaffection, and of the priests especially, towards his own authority and power; he knew of their coalition against the person of Jesus. But how did Pilate act? He knew the unostentatious claims of Jesus to be the Christ, the malice and enmity of his accusers, and the obligation to release him. He sits truly in the place of authority, but he lays aside his sceptre. He ignores the office, and so negatives the power; wherefore the Lord does not answer him. Pilate is a tool, he is in the power of the people, and they know their man. He is not guided by the inward living principle, and, therefore, is moulded by the pressure from without. To ignore the relations of life is to ignore the power of God. God is King, and he has given authority to his servants, and to every man his work. He, then, who is in Christ's stead, witnessing to Christ, must ever maintain authority over wrong-doing. And the sovereignty of Christ is honoured where the relation, and not the individual, is magnified, by a ruling *in righteousness*. They who so rule are channels of power, which cometh from God alone; and so they carry out his behests as he works in and through them, rather than despite of them.

15. Jesus does not condescend to answer Pilate. Since the covenant is broken and the brotherhood no longer exists, Jesus does not for one moment recognise this mockery of power and authority. Pilate, on the one hand, and the high priests on the other, represent the abomination of desolation in its secular and religious aspects, and they show how it works. It works from *without*, according to its own nature, for it is of the old Adam. External influences, and not Christ and the Spirit, in the informing power of a holy love, mould and fashion its actions. Men take upon themselves, or, in the providence of God, find themselves in a distinguished and superior relative position, and they try to fulfil it according to the ways, habits, and opinions of

men—and so, like Pilate, find their refuge in the mere custom of the people.

16. Whether we regard the blind folly of unbelief, the gracious providence of God, or the truth to which the Lord Jesus bore witness on oath before the Sanhedrim, the words of Matthew are very expressive. They had now a notable prisoner called *Barabbas*. He had raised his voice in the streets, stirred the people to revolt, and doubtless had caused much bloodshed. Barabbas, interpreted—a son of the father, would be a deliverer; further, with his name, would so be the counterfeit of Christ, the Son of the living God. Pilate had denied the true King, for he used not his power or his authority. And in the dilemma in which he now finds himself, of either condemning the King or offending the people in releasing him, he puts the very remarkable question, “Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?” Here is the great error with all men in relation to the truth. And it is something, if, after tracing the mind of Matthew, as truth after truth in consecutive order unfolds itself, we come to this point which explains, not only the past, from Adam, but also, to the end of time, the distinctive features of the abomination that maketh desolate. The true Christ is *rejected*, hence the Son of the everlasting Father is not known. And men *prefer* the counterfeit of the Son, and they do so because they will not have Christ crucified, lifted up in the heart, and so to reign over them.

We may be blind to the true condition of the human heart, even of our own heart, but the Word of God shows its antagonism to Christ. Barabbas has committed insurrection against the visible power. Christ is against the invisible that is oppressing all men. Nevertheless, as in religion, the counterfeit is preferred to the true.

19. Did Pilate expect that they would release Christ? We should say not. He evaded his responsibility, and would lay it on the shoulders of the people. Now, a very striking incident happens. By a providential interference, Pilate is warned. A Gentile woman witnesses to the correlative truth, to that declared by Pilate and answered by Jesus. Pilate calls him the King of the Jews, but he is also the Son of the Father, and Pilate's wife attests this as she speaks of him as the righteous One. He is

the Son of the righteous Father, whom the world does not know. We cannot weaken the force of these words by assuming Pilate's wife to be ignorant of the distinct meaning of the epithet. How do we know that she did not know, since she believed herself taught of heaven, and the epithet belonged to him only who was the only begotten of the Father? However, she condemns those who, possessing the oracles of God, reject him. And she, the weaker vessel, a Gentile, and without any office of power, exhorts her husband to exercise his prerogative, untrammelled by any external consideration. If she thus acted through a dream, why should not these men, invested with power, have magnified their office. Possessing the oracles of God, why should they not have obeyed them? but it was the solemn fulfilment of the prophecy already referred to. The people are the flock of the slaughter, and they who possess them slay them, and hold themselves not guilty. And they that sell them say, Blessed be Jehovah; for I am rich: and their own shepherds pity them not. For I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land, saith the Lord. (Zech. xi. 3, 6.) And so the high priests and the elders persuade the people to ask for Barabbas, and to destroy Jesus—and this, in the face of their own Scriptures, predicting with the minutest detail every circumstance of this most eventful time. Yea, the very spirit of the Law, Psalms, and Prophets, was the testimony of him who is the substance of them all. And here we learn how truly it is with every one of us, that, if Christ our King be not enthroned within, we must, from the very nature of things, even while drawing near to God in the ordinances of righteousness (Is. lviii. 2), and with devotional sentiment, desire Barabbas instead of the Son of the true Father.

21. The governor, notwithstanding the compunctions of conscience, the corroborative statement of his wife, the malignant envy of the hierarchy, the friendliness of the people, and the calm undisturbed tranquillity of the Meek and Holy One, is powerless to act. Regarding his own political failings and wrong-doings, he feels that he is in the hands of the Jews, and endeavours to escape the pressure put upon him by resorting to a customary act. Herein he commits a double error. Not only does he fail to release Jesus, but he puts forth a notable and distinguished prisoner, one Barrabas, the last, perhaps, that would have been

desired. Had he released Jesus, and then complied with the custom, some other less guilty one would have been asked for.

22. He had given them their choice of a prisoner; why not, then, release Jesus? Why ask them what he should do with him? Was there not power in the supreme magistrate to act according to truth and equity? But he is the creature of circumstances, moulded by expediency, and acts from pressure from without. Losing sight of the high vantage ground of right, equity, and just dealing, he not only is enslaved, but renders his high and distinguished office powerless. All now cry, "Let him be crucified." Why not stone him, as in the case of Stephen? They feared the people, for with them it would be simply a religious question, but left with Pilate it assumed a political aspect. Then, as they crucified their king, truths are forced upon them in all their mysterious power; but they close their ears, and so are hostile to them in all the power and malignity of sin.

24. Pilate could prevail nothing. Sin now reigns. Pilate, instead of revealing the power which cometh from above, dishonours it. By his own act he divests himself of all authority. He is a miserable coward, and the fear of a tumult precipitates the commission of the greatest wrong, in violence to all that was holy and right, as he delivers the innocent and righteous One to the fury of his enemies.

There is a kind of self-delusion that, if the intention be right, such thereby may expurgate themselves from all the consequences of their impotency and cowardice; whereas, the office, as in this instance, is itself a power, and the power is demonstrated as the office is magnified. Failing this, what resource had Pilate? None; therefore he endeavours to clear himself by adopting an expressive symbolic act. We are not supposing that Pilate truly expressed what Paul did when he said to his countrymen, Your blood be upon your own head. When the Truth was in the very presence of Pilate, he trifled with his own conscience, and put from him the whole counsel of God for the counsel of these murderers. But Paul determined to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Had Pilate obeyed his conscience, he would have shared the reproach of Christ, and have counted it of more honour than all the glory of the kingdoms of this world.

But he commits a judicial murder when he gave up the Holy One to death. His act was the coming forth of the evil within, and the circumstances gave it its form and direction.

Nothing can be more self-deceiving than a comparing of ourselves among ourselves, or a measuring of ourselves by ourselves, for no one could take all the various circumstances into consideration; and if he could, he would then have respect only to the accidents of life, and not to the essential principles of the kingdom of God.

Pilate would throw upon them the burden and responsibility of the act, and tries to excuse himself in something of the same language as used by Judas. He has spoken of Jesus, called the Christ, as the King of the Jews; and now he speaks of him as the righteous One. And so, unconsciously, he testifies to his Melchizedekian character, which, according to interpretation, is King and Righteousness. How strange and unaccountable are the inconsistencies of men. Although he bears testimony to Jesus, is he one whit less guilty in prostituting his office—the shadow of the true—to the service of sin? Though Pilate may have borne verbal testimony to the Christ, the Son of God, and with full intention to set him free, yet he is no less culpable for possessing the evil and obeying it.

25. This verse contains a fearful imprecation, and, without noticing the brand of infamy which this act has perpetuated on this outcast people, we see sin exhibited in its most fearful character. The prohibition to shed innocent blood is enforced by the most solemn sanction. And it would appear, from their ready reply to the governor's words, that they had not overlooked this passage. The way of escape they propose was not merely with a view to transfer the office of executioner to the Roman governor, but also that, if Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, he might prove his innocency by delivering himself. But they knew not their own hearts; and if we would know our own, where shall we turn, in the sacred record, for a true representation that fathoms their deepest depths? Their doing so, instead of extenuating their guilt, increased it. For, if they thus pervert the Scriptures, they are without excuse.

From the time of his anointing, it may be said that Jesus entered upon his passion. He was then truly identified with

man possessed by Satan, whom he came to destroy, that he might set at liberty the *children of a common Father*. As the Son of man, he died for *all* men. Then, because of this great salvation, all men stand in that relation to God which had been jarred and broken by sin. But all things are restored, and "all are saved, especially they who believe." Then, in relation to the truth, as it is in Christ, the Jewish hierarchy and Peter, Pilate and Judas, are representative typical characters. In the first is the outward visible church, entrusted with the oracles of God, and making them void by their traditions, for which they reject the Christ; Peter is one with overweening confidence, full of religious feeling and sentiment, loudly professing a love to Christ, and readiness to die with him, yet denying him. It is of little matter what form this may take, but it is evident that Peter is yet in the bond of iniquity. Thus, in these extreme cases, we see the world's religious side. We now turn to the secular. In Pilate is the supreme power, in whom there is gathered up all the relations of life, which are eloquent of still higher ones. And amid this chaos and confusion Truth walks a wanderer and a stranger.

26. Pilate now releases Barrabas. Having done this, Jesus, according to the Roman custom, is examined by scourging; a very cruel infliction, and sometimes fatal—the bowels being sometimes torn open by the thongs of leather having pieces of lead attached. He was oppressed, he was afflicted, yet opened he not his mouth: by his stripes we are healed. Does he behold Peter's denial of him? Judas's betrayal? the high priests rejecting him? Pilate condemning him? the multitudes—the sheep of the slaughter—calling for his crucifixion? and the Roman soldiers about to heap indignity after indignity upon his sacred person? He is oppressed, he is afflicted, and by his stripes we are healed. In that oppression he sees not the acts of these men, but sin. They work it, they serve it. It is the fruitful source of all the misery, woe, and wrong-doing, that has come, and will come, upon the world, and all ungodly men. He sees what he is about to be—to be made sin—in order that all men might be the righteousness of God *in him*. He is afflicted, and, as a sheep is dumb before its shearers, so opened he not his mouth. Thus did he learn, in a terrible reality, that his hour was come. But in the perfect providence of a loving Father, all the wrong-doing of a cruel and

wicked world educes good. Thus, we, in the afflictive dispensations of a holy and righteous Father, are made partakers of his holiness. So, then, we learn that here there is nothing that can happen but what is under the perfect control of a gracious God. If Moses chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, we are admonished to remember such that are in bonds as *bound with them*, and them that suffer as being ourselves *also in the body*.

27. Jesus is yet a King. No murmuring, no repining escapes his lips, as if God had laid aside his sceptre, and no longer ruled. No; in his patience he possesses his soul. He wars not with flesh and blood, but with evil, yet the world hates him, reviles, and despises him. His ears are opened, and although a King, he is a servant of rulers, and he turns not away his back from the smiters, nor his cheeks from them that pluck off the hair. Now his prayer is heard. It goes forth in an acceptable time. "O, God," he cries, "in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation. Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink : let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters. Let not the waterflood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me. Hear me, O Lord ; for thy loving-kindness is good : turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies. And hide not thy face from thy servant ; for I am in trouble : hear me speedily. Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it. Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour : mine enemies are all before thee." (Ps. lxi. 13—19.)

Have we traced sin in all its terrible and hateful character, as seen in hostility to all that is true, holy, and righteous? But here the Meek and Holy One experiences it in all its desolating and destructive power. He calls upon Jehovah his Elohim, who will help him, therefore he will not be confounded, therefore does he set his face like a flint, and he knows that he shall not be ashamed. (Is. l. 7.) Then, what is the answer? What is the issue of all this *mysterious* patience and endurance and long-suffering mercy? Thus saith Jehovah, In an acceptable time have I heard thee? and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the

desolate places ; that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth ; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves. (Is. xlix. 8, 9.)

But these wretched prisoners of sin and death know not the covenant, for they strip him and cruelly maltreat him. How fearfully is man enslaved ! How painfully does this scene portray his folly, as he will not put off in Christ crucified, *wholly and unreservedly*, the old man with his deeds ! The world gives to its heroes a perishable crown, but to Christ, and those who live Christ, a crown of thorns. It can give no better. It now mockingly replaces on Jesus the worn-out robe, symbol of royalty, which doubtless was thrown over him by a large-hearted centurion as he left the presence of Herod. They put a reed in his right hand—the mock emblem of power—and bow the knee before him, crying, Hail, King of the Jews ! But he is no party to their evil deeds. In perfect meekness he bears their insults. They now, irritated, perhaps, by his calm demeanour and self-possession, spit on him ; but he is now already made man's substitute in all the terrible reality of the filth of the flesh. And because he will not clutch the reed which they placed in his hand, but lets it fall, they, picking it up, strike him on the head with it. They know not that he is come with the sceptre of righteousness to bruise the serpent's head, but, in the service of Satan, they would bruise the head of Christ. Such is the world, and all who serve it. They are in enmity to Christ, and serve sin ; and it is the cross alone lifted up in the heart that destroys sin and slays the enmity. They now take off his garments, and lead him away to be crucified.

32. Before entering upon the striking incident of this verse, we would remark, that in these last two chapters, Matthew has brought before us four men or classes. In the call of the disciples he particularly mentions four. In the sowing of the seed there are four classes of hearers. And now, at the close of his Gospel, he sets before us four as representing all flesh ; while the Truth is indeed a wanderer and a stranger in the midst. And it is not difficult to trace in these four the characteristic features of the world as one great confederacy against Jehovah and his Christ. Judas and Peter profess to be followers, disciples of Christ ; the former betrays him, lusting for other things ; the latter denies him through fear, a slavish fear of the cross ; so both

being without Christ, are in bondage. Pilate, and the high priest, as representing the hierarchy, do not profess Christ. The former is the secular power, and being destitute of the power of Christ, who is the substance, it is moulded, and guided, and fashioned by circumstances and pressure of outward things, rather than by the eternal principles of heaven. The latter is the abomination of desolation, a religion that rejects Christ *crucified*. So they all are, with one consent, as they savour only of that which be of man, confederate with evil, and represent all the forms which include a world of refinement *and progress*, but which is only Antichristian. While, on the other hand, the two women, the one who anointed Jesus for his burial, and the wife of Pilate, together confess Christ the Son of the living God.

Most striking is the incident in this verse. We cannot regard this symbolic expression but as imparting the most significant meaning. Throughout the Gospel, "bearing the cross" is the fundamental and primary truth into the kingdom of God. It is the truth the Lord Jesus was ever enforcing upon his disciples. It stands in the forefront of the teaching not only of Jesus but of all holy men. And we cannot but see in Matthew's use of it, at this critical moment, the important teaching it is intended to convey. Whatever may have been the motives for compelling this man to carry the cross, it is evident from the manner of introducing his name that he was a stranger, perhaps passing at the very time. The word rendered "compelled" is instructive—it is the same used in chap. v. 41, where it refers to a king's courier, or one forced into the service of royalty. They compel him, then, to carry the cross, not because Jesus was exhausted, or sinking from fatigue—for, as the Lamb of God, he was without blemish, as his whole demeanour in the garden testified—but that they might keep up the mockery of royalty. However, he was a witness against them.

As a stranger in Jerusalem, he may have been the only one that had a deep pity for the Lord, and because he may have shown his compassion, they compel him to carry the cross. Every such exception would be, to the bleeding heart of Christ, a precious balm, for in this symbolic act he saw expressed what he desired as the travail of his soul. Amid that throng, that mixed

multitude of scattered disciples, high priests, elders of the people, scribes, and Roman soldiers, there was one that had pity. And what pity does the Lord require? What pity does he want of any man? Only that his work be not in vain, that his mercy and love be not spurned, and that his cross be carried, and thus we, bearing his reproach, shall share his crown.

Who knows what it is to bear the reproach of Christ? Who knows what it is to have a deep sense of his own need? Who knows what it is to be left alone by God, so to become worse, that he may be better?—to know the power of sin, that he may bring the old nature to the cross of Christ, and be not confounded?

33. They come to Golgotha, the usual place of execution, which must be outside the Holy City. Matthew calls it the place of a skull. He has already lifted the vail, and shown us sin in all its malignant working against the covenant of God. He has shown us the condition of *all men*, as the nature of all. So long, then, as we are here in this world, we are according to it, but in Christ we put it off altogether, for in him we are crucified to all. In order to put away this nature, he became one with it, and now he is one with sin, and is cast out into the place of the shadow of death.

They offer him the stupefying drink of sour wine and myrrh, usually given to deaden the sensibility of pain. Jesus tasting it, refuses to drink it. His physical sufferings were not the anguish of his soul. No suffering of the body could be compared with that agony, that cup which the Holy One of God had to drink when he was made sin for us. As King, he had to grapple with it in all its reality and power. Then, how would he overcome, if, instead of looking to Jehovah for help, he rested in the arm of flesh, he looked to any suffering of his human nature as they thought, and as others now think, expressed by the offering of the benumbing draught? All this unmistakeably shows how they *misunderstood* the nature of their redemption, or the conflict in the soul of the Redeemer of mankind.

Would that we could impress, in every step of this work, our readers with the fact that the New Testament is not a history of the life of Jesus, but a revelation of the Father in all the fulness of his covenant; therefore every incident recorded is a revelation

of *spiritual* mysteries. The giving of this draught the Evangelist did not intend merely to record, for Jesus well knew what it was, and why it was given, before he tasted it. But he did taste it, and did refuse it, signifying thereby not that he despised the humanity of the act, but, that it did not reach the platform, the theatre whereon the mighty struggle of all time, the world's conflict, was taking place.

35. Jesus is crucified. He gives a reality to the cross, which hitherto it had not. Henceforth it would be the glory of the redeemed.

What a picture does Golgotha now present to us ! The Son of man on the cross, identified with all men, is putting away the old Adam nature, with all the work of the devil, in the soul of man. At his feet the soldiers, representing all flesh, are now appropriating his garments, casting lots for his vesture : as if the garments of salvation were distributed to all men, but as in the parable of the Sower, only one out of four puts on the robe of righteousness in all its integrity ; for God is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe. Jesus now enters into all the reality of our redemption. And Jehovah, who had dried up the sea, and made the rivers a wilderness, who clothed the heavens with blackness, and made sackcloth their covering, asks, Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem ? or have I no power to deliver ? He will confound his adversaries, he will come forth in the greatness of his strength, mighty to save ; for his own arm will bring salvation, and his fury will uphold him. What, then, is the Lord's cry, as he now contemplates the fearful struggle ? Be not thou far from me, O Jehovah : O my strength, *haste thee* to help me. Deliver my soul from the sword ; my darling from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion's mouth. (Ps. xxii. 19, 20.) How truly does this language explain our redemption ! He is made sin. The soul is not destroyed, but restored, and Satan has no power over it, but it is delivered from all his concentrated malignity. The closer we live to Christ, the more we strive to be kept from the power of the dog, the unclean one, who, going about as a roaring lion, seeks to devour us.

36. Having parted the garments, they sat down and watched him. Does Matthew mean here, simply the customary duty, in

order to prevent their friends removing their bodies or releasing them? At least one, if not more of the soldiers, must have been impressed with the solemn and mysterious events in which they were taking part. And, as Jesus gave audible utterance to the twenty-second Psalm, they may have heard the strange address to Jehovah, and so sat watching to see if Jehovah would release him. Men, strangers to their true condition, strangers to the oppressive power of sin, seek not to be released from it, though they seek the outward signs of salvation, of redemption, even that of the cross itself, when they look upon it as an outward thing, as a paying of "a penalty to satisfy the justice of God." Gathering around the crucified One, they could not see on that cross the greatest miracle the world ever beheld—the Holy One of God numbered with transgressors, with those workers of evil, who would overthrow all power, order, and dominion, so made sin, a spectacle not only to men but to angels. Callous, ignorant of the truth, sinful and adulterous, they know not sin, nor their need of redemption.

37. However, they want a sign, and they have it: for the Roman governor—however much he was in the hands of the Jews, who might accuse him of many grievous malpractices—must work the providence of God. He could not disburden his mind of the deep conviction that he had, through the malice of his enemies, been an instrument to destroy the faithful One of the God of this very mysterious people. He asked them what he was to do with Jesus who is called Christ. And now that he is doing their will, he writes the title, "King of the Jews." This title the Lord Jesus loved. He died, as he was born, King of the Jews; and the offerings of the Magi expressed the inward and spiritual character of his sovereignty. Whether Pilate understood this title or not is of little matter, Matthew records it. Now, a Jew is not one that is outward, nor is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh, but a Jew is one inwardly, who has the true circumcision—that not made with hands—in putting off the old man, the body of sins, whose praise is *not of men*, but of God, for he is then in the Spirit. But where is the Jew since Jesus was betrayed, denied, rejected? Nevertheless the title is true: He is King of the Jews—King in the truest sense, and of them only who are true Jews. Therefore, the

soldiers who have at his feet parted his garments and appropriated his vesture, now over his head place the title, "King of the Jews." However, sin works and has worked, and Jesus says, I and my Father worketh hitherto. They work ever against sin; and if men will not obey the covenant in works of faith, labours of love, and patience of hope, the providence of God in outward things speaks to man, and will hereafter rise up in the judgment to his condemnation. On the accursed tree Jesus is King, and although he is crucified with two robbers, so in the same condemnation accursed of God and cast out by man; yet as King, one is on his right hand, and the other is on his left, as it will be in glory. Thus, then, in the midst of thick darkness, light springs up in the providence of a faithful God. And if men will not obey the truth, but keep it down in unrighteousness, God nevertheless, so long as he is pleased to endure in long-suffering mercy, reveals himself in the providential arrangements of every-day life. And some men occasionally discover this. However, Matthew is forcing it on us for our consideration, and we are by it, as by the Word, exhorted to go unto Jesus without the camp bearing his reproach, carrying his cross, that, crucified to the world and the world to us, sin may be destroyed and the enmity slain.

39. While Jesus is *made sin*, suffering the agony of the cross, enduring a death accursed of God—for the wrath of God is poured out to the very dregs against *sin*—the providence of God is bearing witness of the goodness, mercy, and love of God even to them who are crucifying him; even as Matthew looks beyond the cross to the crown, and beholds Jesus with some on the right hand and some on the left. Some are now passing by, reviling him, saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it again in three days, save thyself. Likewise said the chief priests, scribes, and elders, mocking him and saying, He saved others; himself he cannot save. They were mad against him; their consciences are a burden to them. They express sin in its true character. The Word of God reveals it, and where should we look for it *if not at the cross of Christ?* The words they utter indicate how truly they understood his claims to be the true temple destroyed in his holocaust, restored again in three days in a new and better life, which, as the true high priest, he would bear into the holiest of all; for they understood his claim to be not only the King of

Israel, but also the Son of God. Men now understand the Christian religion far better than the Jews did in old time; but, while knowing these things, they do them not. In the old Adam, men intellectually know these things; but, lifted up in the pride of self-conceit, they will not put off the old Adam, and so they reject Christ. While they profess to know him, and to serve him, they reject him; for the moment he, in any man, testifies against him that his works are evil—and they are so simply because they are of the cultivated, polished, refined old Adam—he is rejected. Not only is this true between man and man, but it is true in every believer: a mighty struggle continues there, for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, for they are contrary. So, then, here at the cross, we behold sin showing its malignant hostile front in all its strength against the Holy One of God, who on the cross is exhibiting its true character, as accursed of God, and bringing down upon himself the unmitigated wrath of Jehovah. Satan shows his bitterness, his malignant hostility against him as the King of Israel, as the Son of David. How subtle are these words, “If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.” What! the Son of God in an accursed death, nailed to the tree, accursed, dead in sin, dead to God: Let him come down from the cross. Had he done so, instead of remaining and putting away sin, *dying to it*, he would have been as we—sons of our father the devil. But he proved that he was the Son of God by putting away the sin of the world and redeeming all men. Satan in the hearts of men will confess any truth rather than be cast out. Let no man be deceived. If he will but strive to live Christ crucified—if he will but agonize the agony upon the platform of his own heart, he will soon discover the venom of the serpent. It must be a reality within. And all that evil, all that sin which we now see in all its dreadful working in the chief priests, scribes, and elders, is now warring in the soul of Jesus, and will war to the end, when he will bear it away—the sin of the world, after having reigned into death—into a land unknown and uninhabited, and then the Spirit in all his fulness will come.

And that this work of Jesus was in no outward visible sign Matthew indicates, as he says, The robbers also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth. Though he is

crucified, numbered with the transgressors, and they bear his reproach, yet they show that they are yet one with sin. It is puerile to say that Matthew, because he has not given us more of the details concerning the robbers, was not in possession of the more particular account given by Luke. If he did not possess a knowledge of all, how is it that he makes this singular statement—*the two* cast the same in his teeth? If, in reality, one only did so, and the other kept silence, it would have been the act of the two, and so may have been, in the providence of God, that which hastened on in the mind of the other a saving knowledge of the truth; of which, indeed, he could not have been ignorant, as he must often have received it from the lips of the Lord Jesus himself at those seasons when he and his companions would come up to Jerusalem with impunity. Matthew guards us against all sandy foundations, for if our faith stood in doctrine or physical suffering, there would be plenty here. It is, therefore, more important that he should withhold what he has than sacrifice his distinctive idea to a farther historical account of the malefactor's repentance.

Could we but realise the scene—the hellish satisfaction with which these bloodhounds gazed on the sacred person of the Redeemer, the unrestrained fanaticism of the blind multitude, the unfeeling barbarity of the Roman soldiery, the incoherent raillery of the impenitent robber, and the unnatural darkness now coming on—we should be overwhelmed with the reflection *that this is human nature*. And yet, in the midst of all, there is One who is King, who is come to deliver the souls of men from this terrible thralldom, as attested even by a Gentile.

45. From the sixth until the ninth hour—that is, from noon till three, P.M.—there was darkness over all the earth. The imaginary discrepancy between Matthew and John arises from overlooking the fact that John wrote the Gospel after the destruction of Jerusalem, and therefore gave up the Jewish mode of reckoning. The time of this darkness was that when the sun should have shone in all his strength and glory; but it gave place to darkness. This is hardly creation's sympathy with her suffering Lord, but rather the outward expression of, and so a striking testimony to, the truth, that sin, in all its reality, even as it dwells in the heart of man, was now laid upon the Redeemer,

that he, who knew no sin, was now made sin for us in all its concentrated reality. Darkness was now visible—it was felt—a testimony to sin in all its strength. Nevertheless, the Holy One, in all that fearful conflict, is putting away the sin of the world, and so redeeming mankind. Jehovah hath sworn by the *excellency* of Jacob (Amos, viii. 7)—that is, by himself—that because there is *no truth, no mercy, no knowledge of God* in the land (Hos. iv. 3), it shall be as the flood of Egypt. And so Jehovah was now dealing with his Christ, the true Jonah. (Jon. ii. 2, &c.) And it shall come to pass in that day, saith Jehovah Elohim, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day. (Amos, viii. 9.) Then, if we obey not the truth, he will turn our feasts into mourning, and all our songs into lamentations, and bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head, and make as the mourning of an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day; and a day will come that he will send a famine of the Word of life.

Shall the Holy One of God thus suffer and thus put away sin, and man continue therein? How shall they, who *are dead to sin*, continue any longer therein. (Rom. vi. 2.)

46. Only one exclamation of the seven uttered by Christ from the cross is recorded by Matthew. He would fix our minds that we might somewhat apprehend the dread reality he is revealing. It was the middle and the most pregnant saying of all. He who is very God divests himself of his attributes and perfections, and, in the *κρυψις* of the divine nature, is in the form of a servant, and, being in fashion as a man, he humbles himself, and suffers death—the *accursed death*—for man. He is made sin for all, and so is dead—dead in sin—and is cast out and drowned as the flood of Egypt. Then his death—a death to sin—is the death of all men; it is the destruction of the evil one, and, by consequence, the deliverance of all subject to bondage.

That outward suffering was the symbolic expression of the accursed death—the second death—as it gave utterance to those fearful and mysterious words, “My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?” Let us, then, not be misled by any sentimental remarks with respect to the human nature of the Redeemer. Whatever obscuration the deity of Christ, or the spiritual union, may have suffered, it was not from physical weak-

ness or pain, but from sin. Losing sight of this important truth—for our help is not in the flesh, which is ever weak, much less in sinful flesh, but in Jehovah—the nature of our redemption is not clearly apprehended. Nor does the statement, “that this bodily pain was not all, but that his soul was in immediate contact with and prospect of death,” at all rectify or explain it. We would ask, What death he was *in prospect of*? Was it a death to the world? or death to God? for they are as widely different as holiness and sin. Being made sin, he was dead, already dead to God, and the deliverance from this was in a death or separation *from all* that is not of the Father. His prospect, then, was a prospect of joy, even the joy of a mighty deliverance, of which his outward death was the sign and expression. The Captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering—that is, he endured the cross, he thus passed through suffering, and he was then made perfect in all the fulness of God.

In the experience of Jesus, when he gave utterance to the words of the twenty-second Psalm, the world was judged, and the prince of it cast out. This is accomplished for every man. He, therefore, who will not now possess Christ, will have hereafter to experience in outer darkness, as an unchanged lot, an everlasting forsaking of God as the portion of the *unholy and unrighteous*.

But what is the attitude of the multitude towards him who is now alone treading the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of God? Did they hear those words—those very pregnant words, of that most mysterious cry, which brought up vividly before them the whole of Psalm xxii., wherein our redemption is fully set forth? They did: but they lied against their own souls; for, in mockery, some said he calleth for Elias. It appears elsewhere that, after the Lord uttered that piercing cry of the Psalm, he exclaimed, “I thirst!” Matthew does not mention this, but his words imply it. To suppose that the Lord required anything to slake his intolerable thirst would be to miss the fact that in that august One, upon whose eyelids the mists of death were now hanging, there was going on a mighty conflict of holiness and sin when Jehovah’s arm wrought salvation. This was the Lord’s experience, and so he gave utterance to it. But Matthew passes it by and keeps still before us the mysterious cry above referred to, and would intimate that the giving of the vinegar was not to

slake his thirst, as it was a returning to the stupefying draught, and showed that while they wrested his words, and regarded not their own redemption, they fulfilled a remarkable prophecy, and brought down upon themselves the awful prediction of the prophet. (Ps. lxix. 21—28.) They reap the fruit of their own doing, that as they gave him gall for his meat and vinegar for his drink, their table should be a snare to them, their eyes darkened that they see not, their loins continually shake, the Lord's indignation poured out upon them, their habitation desolate, because now that he is dying to redeem them, they stop their ears and harden their hearts.

50. With a loud voice Jesus dismissed his Spirit. The loud voice was the result of "his heart melting in the midst of his bowels." It attested that his work was finished. Wherefore his Spirit is dismissed, set free. He had died to sin. Then was sin put away, the enmity slain, and man redeemed with an everlasting salvation. For we thus judge, if one died—*απεθανε*—for all, then all died—*απεθανον*. And he died for—in the stead of, *υπερ*—all, that they who live should henceforth not live unto *themselves*, but unto him who died for them, and rose again. Wherefore, henceforth know we no man *after the flesh*. (2 Cor. v. 15, 16: Rom. vi. 11; vii. 4; viii. 10: 2 Cor. iv. 10, 11: Gal. ii. 20; vi. 14.) The Spirit of the Son is now given back into the hand of the Father, not polluted with sin, but cleansed, washed, holy. Thus he died, and then he revealed his righteousness in oneness with Jehovah. He, the Holy One, had borne the sin of the world, from which the almighty arm of Jehovah alone could set him free. In the former cry it is the exclamation of the Christ bearing the sin of the world. In this it is the Son of God dismissing his Spirit unpolluted, free, and holy into the hands of the Father. Here we may understand Rom. iv. 25, how that he was delivered because of our offences, and was raised again because *of our being made righteous*. The Spirit returning to the Father, released from sin, untainted, so purged by the consuming fire of the holiness of Jehovah; and thus, in *oneness with the Father* is our righteousness, therefore was Jesus raised again. Thus was Christ identified with man in his utter degradation and complete alienation from God, and, having rolled back the full tide of sin and iniquity, he reveals a relation which sin and death cannot destroy.

51. The sign of life for evermore is now given. Behold the vail of the temple is rent in twain; completely so—an awful testimony to them who had been so solicitous to find witness against the true. It witnessed that the way into the holiest of all was now *made perfect*, that through that rent vail of the flesh of the Holy One of God Jehovah was revealed, and so by and in Christ crucified, all have access by one Spirit unto the Father. If, then, we learn Christ—if we put him on, he is our intercessor, propitiation, mediator. In him, in Christ the Son of God, the one foundation laid, is built up a glorious temple, a habitation for God by the Spirit. “We are brought nigh by the blood of Christ”—that is the Spirit of Christ, for it is this Spirit that now returns to the Father. The holocaust has been made, and the life goes forth into the holiest of all. Thus, then, the tabernacle of David, which was fallen down, is in truth built again, that the residue of men may seek the Lord if haply they should feel after him.

The earth quaked and the rocks were rent, as when Jehovah revealed himself from Sinai—all which attested redemption, even as the giving of the holy law from Sinai. So now he shakes (Hagg. ii. 6), even as he will hereafter (Heb. xii. 26, 27) shake, not the earth only, but also heaven. Therefore should we, by the mercies of God, enter within the vail, and, as true kings and true priests, present before God continually our bodies as *living sacrifices, holy* and acceptable unto him as our reasonable service.

52. The graves were opened, and the bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of their graves after the resurrection. After the Lord had risen this took place. Wonderful and strange as this may appear, the resurrection of a dead body is not so wonderful as that of a dead soul. If we know anything of ourselves, of our complex being, of the source of our sorrows and joy, of our fears and our hope; if we know anything of that fearful chasm between sin and holiness, we know something of a soul raised from the dead. They who came forth from the graves attested that sin was destroyed, death abolished, and life everlasting was the common lot of all men.

54. The soldiers may not have understood the nature of the Redeemer's sufferings; they may not the necessity for the Holy

One to banish sin ; nor have had any idea of the covenant ; but they had at least yielded to the conviction which the solemn realities of that hour had awakened in their minds as they exclaimed, Truly this was the Son of God. In recording this incident, Matthew confirms the truth, that as the Son of God he dismissed his Spirit into the hands of the Father. And in the remarkable words in which he clothes the narrative, he sets forth the two truths running throughout the whole Gospel as the confession of all men. Seeing the *earth quake* and the things taking place, as the shaking of things that are made, that those which cannot be shaken may remain, they exclaimed, Truly this was the Son of God. It indicates the nature of a true faith. So the Gentiles attest the Messias. But where are they who imprecated the awful judgment of God upon themselves and their children ? The high priests, scribes, and elders are indeed here, and are indeed provoked to jealousy by men in their estimation the most unlikely. It is not the soft, luxurious, and effeminate ; it is not the highly cultivated, refined, and self-disciplined that first bear their testimony to the Redeemer of mankind ; but men, though trained in military discipline, accustomed to scenes of blood, and to the indulgence of their worst passions, too often with cruelty and barbarity. These who had reviled, mocked, spitted on, and consigned to other indignities, the blessed Redeemer, now distinctly attest the truth. And when we consider their pagan prejudices, and their seeing him rejected by his own nation, his disciples forsaking him, and the women standing afar off, his appearance of utter helplessness, saying, I am a worm and no man ; all my bones are out of joint, my strength is dried up like a potsherd, my tongue cleaveth to my jaws—and so it was, for he was without form or comeliness, with no beauty that he should be desired, dying a malefactor's doom in the same condemnation with the others—their obstacles to a sincere conviction must have been great ; nevertheless they gave utterance to the truth, saying, Truly this was the Son of God. And if the resurrection is the attestation to this truth (Rom. i. 4), that he was the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, Matthew signified it by the exclamation. It even went farther than the Lord's words to the penitent robber, This day shalt thou be with me in paradise. The centurion bore

witness in the midst of the most adverse circumstances to the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.

Christ died for all, and the Spirit is poured out upon all, witnessing to the truest life for all. All are thus redeemed from sin, and all are blessed of the Father. But faith is too often made to be the mere acknowledgment of these facts, which is *practically* an indifference to them. To confess them is *to agonize the agony of faith* in Christ, putting off the old Adam, and so laying hold of eternal life. We have an altar whereof they have *no power* to eat who serve the tabernacle, that is the flesh; for the bodies of the beasts whose blood—that is, whose life—was carried into the holy places before God by the high priest, were burned (*περι ἁμαρτίας*) for, or in the place of sin, without the camp. And Jesus, that he might sanctify with his blood—that is, his life—suffered without the gate. (Heb. xiii. 10, 12.) Therefore should we, if we would partake of this altar, *go forth unto him without the camp bearing his reproach*.

56. This is no mere sentiment, but a stern reality. He who faithfully puts on Christ will have to deal with his old Adam nature, will have to pass through the painful experience of the crucifixion of all nature's feelings and affections, for the old man is corrupt according to the *deceitful* lusts. Matthew, like a true master, plays his variations. He possesses the heavenly treasure, and can bring forth out of it things new and old. He has just spoken of two women standing out and expressing the truth, as it is in the Son of David and the Son of Abraham, even the power and righteousness of Jehovah. But those which had followed and ministered to Jesus from Galilee to the cross, now stand afar off.

57. But when it was evening, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was taught by Jesus. He came unto Pilate and begged the body of Jesus. He was ready to part with his riches for this body, expressive of his sharing his reproach. Pilate, whether struck by the deep humility of this rich man, or stung with the upbraidings of his own conscience, commanded the body *to be given* to him. No act could be more expressive of bearing the reproach of Christ, of carrying the cross, than this of Joseph. Need we say again and again, that we do not confound the outward act with the inner man; but

following the mind of the writer, we see when and how far the outward act expresses, or is intended to signify, the inward faith or otherwise. And when Joseph had taken the body he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock, and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed. He had found the hid treasure, and so, as such, he appropriated it. He rolls a great stone against the sepulchre, and departed. Like the finder of the hid treasure (chap. xiii. 44), he is diligent in securing it as such, and manifesting it as he bears his reproach. He stands out from the rest, and casts his lot in with the crucified Nazarene, bearing, it may be, the obloquy, sneers, and reproaches of his fellows. Sacrificing all that wealth and position could give, casting under his feet the prized honours and coveted distinctions of a sinful world, he wins and possesses the one thing needful—Christ, dead and buried.

61. The two Marys sit over against the sepulchre watching. And there is, we think, but little difficulty in discovering why they watched. What should follow the Lord's death but his resurrection? However, these women could not credit the fact itself when it had occurred; nevertheless there is much to show that they looked for it, however timid, however weak, be their faith. Joseph *appropriates the death*. When thus we, like him, *live Christ*, we must watch for the true life, as these women are represented doing so. Why, then, does Salome, the *mother of Zebedee's sons* (verse 56), depart? Her hopes of the right hand and the left in the kingdom, are buried with the burial of Christ. And by another circumstance, Matthew shows that the resurrection is prominent in his mind. And further, he shows how to the last, despite of every testimony, the abomination of desolation will strive to frustrate the purpose of Almighty God. We might suppose that there was a limit to the darkening, blinding, influences of sin, but there is not. The chief priests and Pharisees have rejected the Christ, and having done so, they will continue in the abomination that maketh desolate, not only to the end of life, but also to the judgment, and to all eternity.

63. They come on the Jewish Sabbath, which was, in truth, the day after the preparation, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will arise

again. They were not ignorant of the words of Jesus, nor of their spiritual and symbolical import. It suited them to be blind to them. It does suit men to make the most bitter and condemnatory remarks upon anything that is a power for good, when they will live in the old Adam. These men knew the claims of Jesus to be the Christ the Son of God—that he said, he would be put to death, and would rise again on the third day, and come in the clouds of heaven. They knew that he claimed to be the temple of God—that it would be destroyed, when he would die the holocaust for the people, and that he would build it again in three days in his resurrection life. Here, then, we perceive the perversity of human nature—for the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked—standing out in all its fearful obstinate antagonism against the most irresistible outward testimony, and the conviction of their own consciences. Uncircumcised in heart and ears, they do always resist the Holy Ghost.

64. They ask Pilate to command that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day—that is the end of it. They were anxious to detect untruth in the words and predictions of the Lord. If, then, he did not rise on the third day, they would know that it was not of God. The last error shall be worse than the first. They could not gainsay the overwhelming testimony to him as the Christ, but the resurrection would indeed prove him to be the Son of God. And even if it were so, as it was so, but few believed.

65. Pilate had had enough of them. They had compelled him to do what he heartily wished he had not done. He could not be ignorant of those things that had so strongly impressed his own soldiers; nor of the anxiety and slavish fear of them who now come to him. He had readily given up the body to Joseph without exacting from him anything for doing so. But he tells these Jews in their dilemma to do it themselves, as they know how. They had forced him to crucify Jesus; he now leaves them to violate their own Sabbath. What an awful curse is prejudice! Had they been free from it, they would, like the centurion, have known the truth.

66. He had given them a guard—that was sufficient for him to do. The rest they must do themselves, and so he dismissed them.

They went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch. Is man to determine for himself what shall be the conditions of his faith? If so, God will respect the sealing and the watch. But he has given a witness not to be determined by the old Adam himself, or by any of the senses, however wondrous and telling be the miraculous sign, but to be experienced in the inner soul, delivering it from all the cruel bondage and merciless thralldom of the bitter enemy of God and man.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

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- 1 IN the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.
- 2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake : for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door,
- 3 and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment
- 4 white as snow : and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead *men*.
- 5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye ; for I
- 6 know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here : for he is
- 7 risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead ; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee ; there shall ye see him : lo, I have told you.
- 8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy ; and did run to bring his disciples word.
- 9 And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail ! And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.
- 10 Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid : go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.
- 11 Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.
- 12 And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel,
- 13 they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, His disciples came
- 14 by night, and stole him *away* while we slept. And if this come to the
- 15 governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught : and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.
- 16 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain
- 17 where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they wor-
- 18 shipped him : but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them,
- 19 saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye there-
- fore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and
- 20 of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost : teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

1. HARMONISTS find the incidents of the resurrection, as recorded by the several Evangelists, most unsatisfactory. If they could make the details harmonize, what then? Would the harmony be as satisfactory as the independent accounts? So it may be said of the whole Gospel. There is, however, a true harmony, not, indeed, in the letter, but in the spiritual truth set forth by each writer. Each writes from his own point of view; and even here, with respect to the time of the resurrection, there is scarcely any discrepancy in the united record. Matthew says, *At the end of the Sabbaths*; while this is the form for the *seven* days; yet the point of time must make him feel that it was the last Sabbath under the old dispensation, and so he would express it, not without respect to the time of the beginning of the future Sabbath. Mark tells us that the Sabbath being gone through, and being very early, the sun having risen, the women came to the grave. Mark, doubtless, as the amanuensis of Peter, would follow the old fisherman, taking the heavens for his chart, and would note the first break of day, when the rays are seen just streaking the eastern horizon with their golden tints. Then, with respect to John; as the place where the sepulchre was situated was a garden, and being, perhaps, shadowed by trees, it would be dark, the beloved disciple, filled with a desire to reach the sacred spot, would be impressed with its gloom at this early hour, and so would describe it as yet dark. It is with these Evangelists that the apparent discrepancy exists. Matthew and Luke agree, and they would agree with the others were due allowance made for the circumstances under which they wrote.

Then, since light is come into the world, since the Sun of righteousness is risen with healing in his wings, the break of day would be rather with the dawn of light, than with the advent of darkness. So, then, at the close of the Sabbaths, and on the first day of the week, Jesus rose from the dead. He was the resurrection. In him the whole human family rose—a spiritual resurrection, to be enjoyed in all its fulness hereafter.

The time of reformation being come, the law of ordinances having passed away in the advent of Christ, the Sabbath must end with the natural day. It was, moreover, to be kept on the first day of the week, witnessing to the restoration of all things in a Triune God—the true rest for man. Creation, at least, bore

witness to a rest, but before that rest there must be *a ceasing from toil*, as God ceased from the work of creation, and entered into rest; man ceases from his own works *as a sign* that he has put off the old Adam, and enters into rest—which is also taught in redemption, in a coming up out of Egypt. But the Sabbath being, now, the first day of the week, taught that the dispensation of *carnal* ordinances was past, was put off for ever; that man was now, being crucified with Christ, no longer under the dominion of the law, the outward law, but walking in the Spirit, the true rest. He was, by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, set free from the law of sin and death.

Matthew now tells us that the two Marys come to the sepulchre—they come at early dawn, and find the stone rolled away; there was a shaking of the earth, and two angels sat there, but the Lord's body was gone. In the presence of these pure and holy beings of heaven, the keepers became as dead men, a painful picture of the world as it will appear at the general resurrection, when the Lord shall come *in the glory* of the Father with his holy angels.

In these Roman soldiers, famed for their well-ordered discipline and indomitable courage, now becoming as dead men, there is a striking contrast with the women, who here are the representatives of true Christians. Those may be trained and inured to face death in many of its terrible forms, and without any indication of fear, but before the kingdom, in the presence of those *who attest its presence*, they become as dead men; not so those, who, whatever be their physical strength, are one with Christ in his death, and seek the resurrection life, in Jesus.

The world is, indeed, shaking, it is passing away—when men cry, “Peace,” “Peace,” then cometh sudden destruction, but the kingdom, that cannot be moved, remains. No one can seek Jesus, who has not first known the Christ, *and this is here distinctly taught*. No one can seek the pearl of great price, without first possessing the hid treasure. These women seek it, and so they are unmoved at the appearance of these heavenly beings. If thus we seek Jesus, *seek him through his death and burial, and so in Christ*, we shall have no cause to fear the passing away of all things that now appear. “Ask, and ye shall receive.” Joseph of Arimathea asked, and he received. “Seek, and ye

shall find." This the women did. The former asked the hid treasure, the buried Christ; the latter sought the pearl of great price, the true life in the Spirit. Thus, the Lord has his witnesses, despite the malevolence of the Jews, and the unbelief of the Gentiles.

6, 7. They are shown the place where the Lord lay. They are now the messengers to the disciples. They are told that the Lord goeth before them into Galilee. Why into Galilee? Why should Galilee be so often mentioned, unless it had an important signification? It was in Galilee that the transfiguration took place. And now, in his resurrection life and body, he goes before them even to that same mountain. The glory of Jehovah had been revealed on Mount Zion in the holy of holies. The Holy One himself had trodden the courts of the outer temple. But, since Jerusalem has cast him out as a malefactor, has rejected him, he will now, on the mount of his holiness, in Galilee of the Gentiles, reveal himself, anticipating his ascension and the giving forth of the Spirit. Christ goes before us, that where he is we may be also. He goes to provide a place for us. He goes to take possession of the inheritance. But he goes before his disciples, for they who take the cross—his yoke—*follow him*. They ascend the mount of the Lord.

The appearance of the angel is like lightning, and his raiment is white as snow. His words are to the women, "Behold! I have told you." He is the symbol of holiness. As *holy* angels they attest the holiness of God, and in these simple words is the communication of the truth. The Lord's going before is the ground of our holiness before God: we are holy, not indeed by God bringing his holiness down to our capacity, as we hear preached in our parish churches, but in its integrity as in God, in and through Christ alone. Man is for a little while made lower than the angels, to be crowned with honour and with glory. So, then, one of these holy ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation, while revealing the kingdom, expresses the unspeakable dignity of those who carry the cross and seek Jesus.

8. The women, now, by no means unmoved by the realities of another world, and alternating with fear and joy, depart, when Jesus meets them. Is it not so with every one who enters the

kingdom of God? Does he not continually alternate between fear and joy? So long as he lives in this visible state of things, and strives to realise the kingdom, he will have a deep consciousness of the body of sin cleaving to him. Yet he rejoices always, he rejoices in the Lord—that is, having the mind which was in Christ Jesus, counting all things but loss for Christ, living Christ, he then rejoices in the Lord. Thus is he partaker of the holiness and righteousness of God. That they are one with the Lord is signified by the symbol frequently mentioned by Matthew—they not only prostrate themselves, but *lay hold* of the feet of him who is the resurrection and the life.

10. Again is the same message urged upon them. Matthew passes by many important incidents of the resurrection, as he sets forth the glorification of Jesus. He regards the two as inseparable. Of this, the words of Paul are a striking commentary, If ye be risen with Christ (all men are), *seek* the things which are above; set not your affections on things below, but on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God; for *your life* is hid *with Christ* in God. Wherefore, the Lord directs the women to go and tell *his brethren*—even all who forsook him and fled—that they go into Galilee, and there they shall see him.

11. While these are doing the will of the Lord, others, blinded by the god of this world, are doing his works. What, then, is it that distinguishes men in the sight of God? Some choose the evil and refuse the good; others cleave to the good and abhor the evil. The chief priests and elders are informed of the events of the resurrection. So, then, did they but obey the Scriptures, for which they appeared to have so much zeal, they would be willing, in the beauties of holiness, according to Melchizedeck's power, but they reject it, they put from them Christ, in whom alone that power is vouchsafed them. And now, with a large sum, they bribe the soldiers. Does the mercy of God forsake man, since he vouchsafes such a convincing testimony to the Christ the Son of God? Is it not incredulous that men should be so unbelieving? But we have here but a faint outline of the heart of man that rejects Christ. What could God do more? What circumstance or what imagery could pourtray the heart of man as here? It is deceitful above all things, and *desperately* wicked. And it is so without any hope of amendment. It must be put off as it is.

14. With money, these wretched men brought Jesus to the accursed death—for money the resurrection is denied. Well may it be said, Money is the root of all evil; and how truly does the old Adam, the Esau nature, part with its birthright for a morsel of meat; and so, like these soldiers, men are bribed *to leave* their eternal interests in the hands of those who scruple not to commit any abomination in order to maintain their own prejudices and prepossessions.

16. The disciples go into Galilee unto the mountain. There is not a doubt but that it was that of the transfiguration. Here they see him, not, indeed, transfigured, but in his resurrection body, and in his glory. Paul saw him in a light above the brightness of the sun. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, *from glory to glory*, as by the Spirit of the Lord. And because of this glorious appearance, some worshipped and some doubted.

Many explain this doubting of the disciples as the result of the Lord's distance from them. Although it may have been the occasion referred to by Paul, when five hundred brethren saw him, it is not of them Matthew here speaks, but of the eleven. They doubt what they behold. They had seen him in his humiliation on the cross; they now behold him as the Lord, when he most truly manifested forth his glory. The Jews had destroyed the temple, but he had raised it again; and he now reveals the truth how that, through the vail of his flesh, we enter into his presence, even the presence of his glory, which shines unto us. "He tabernacled among us," says John, "and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." The former clause points to the transfiguration, the latter to this manifestation, for it could not be said till after his resurrection and glorification that he was *full of grace and truth*.

18. Some are prostrate worshipping him; some stand astonished. Jesus approaches and speaks unto them, as he did in the transfiguration, to Paul, to the seer of Patmos, so now to all, saying, "All power in heaven and earth is given unto me." Had he not this before, as the Son of God, "which he abideth continually?" True; but to him, as Melchizedek, is it given; being King, he has thrown down all adverse power, and, as the Son of

God, he blesses all men with righteousness. He is declared to be the Son of God *with power, according to the Spirit of holiness*, by the resurrection of the dead—of all men. (Rom. i. 4.)

He is gone into the heavens, and is on the right hand of God, angels, authorities, powers, being made subject unto him; and he must reign until he puts down all rule and all authority and power, until he puts all enemies under his feet, and the last enemy is death, then he will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, that God may be all and in all. It is the gracious office of the Holy Spirit to take the things of Jesus and show them unto us; and in the common things of life—in all the relations that constitute mutual intercourse, and in all nature, so that by visible things—we clearly read the invisible things of God, even the eternal power and Godhead. Thus, then, heaven and earth constitute one vast temple. For it hath pleased the Father, in the fulness of time, to gather into one all things *into Christ*, both which are in heaven and in earth, even in him; further, in him all fulness dwells.

19. Go ye *therefore*, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Although the particle “therefore,” be a gloss, nevertheless *there is a connexion far closer between the truths in this and the preceding verse than any words can express.*

Baptism is a sign and seal—as the former, it is the assurance of the fulfilment by God of some promise; and, as the latter, it is the outcoming, the expression of the thing signified. It signifies, then, what God has done, and the obligation on man to manifest it. On our coming into the world, it meets us as a sign and as a seal. It signifies that we possess Christ in his death and burial—that we are dead to sin, which is buried *out of sight*, borne away into a land “*uninhabited*.” And then, as a seal, it gives *expression* of this and of the life which follows.

Baptism takes the place of circumcision. Abraham received the sign of circumcision—a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised. Circumcision has a spiritual signification—the putting off of the body of the flesh, the putting off of the old Adam; this Abraham had done, and then he possessed in Christ the righteousness of God, the fulness of the covenant, of which circumcision was then the seal. Under

the Gospel, baptism is the sign and seal of a true faith in Christ the Son of God. It is the circumcision of Christ—a spiritual circumcision in the putting on of Christ, a circumcision made without hands, a circumcision of the heart, the result of oneness with Christ.

The difficulties which have enveloped this sacrament lie not in the nature of it, but in the almost universal ignorance of the distinctive principles of the Gospel, and in the neglect of the Old Testament, in every part of which they are expressed or implied.

What is here commanded, in respect to this sacrament, in no wise militates against its application to infants, but, on the contrary, implies their suitableness for it.

As an argument for pædo-baptism, it may be asked, What was the object for which the sign of circumcision was given? God says, I will *establish* my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee. This is my covenant, which you shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee, Every man child among you shall be circumcised. He that is born in the house, and he that is bought with thy money, *must needs* be circumcised, and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. It is clearly seen why free-born and slave must need be circumcised. It teaches us that the grace of God *already bestowed* must be made manifest. Circumcision, then, was the sign of the covenant which found its expression in the truth, according to the words of Paul, *Sin was dead, and I was alive once without the law*; and so, circumcision not only signified this, but was the seal or expression of it.

Every child coming into this world, though inheriting the common taint in the old Adam nature, is nevertheless, through the grace of God in Christ, delivered from sin—"sin is dead," the "enmity is slain," and through the Spirit of the Son the Spirit is life. And with the law of this life, this indwelling Spirit of life, he loves God with all his heart, his mind, his soul, and strength. Of this, baptism is now the sign and seal. The covenant, then, embraces every child coming into the world. It is, indeed, no mere form or shadow, no imaginary thing that may or may not be, but a reality, the result of the Father revealing himself in the advent of Christ and the gift of the Spirit.

Baptism, then, occupies the place of circumcision, and the Church, from the first, has followed the command of Christ, to regard all persons capable of it. The Lord commanded his disciples to baptize all nations—therefore, to baptize their own. The Gospel does not diminish their privileges. If God *established* his covenant with them and their seed, of which circumcision was the sign, and they, by express command, circumcised the child on the eighth day, has he, under a *fuller* manifestation of himself, forbidden children to come unto him? Has he, under a *fuller* revelation, diminished the blessings and the privileges of the Christian Jew?

They were commanded to make disciples—that is, to make the grace of God already bestowed *effective*—of all nations, and this without any restriction whatever. What, then, would be their practice as Jews? Would it be other than that to which they were accustomed?—to regard children not only as capable of this holy rite, but as, in truth, already partakers of the blessings of the covenant?

Baptism is the sign of our death to sin, of the death of Christ being our death; to which, in ceasing from sin, we, throughout our earthly existence, are bound to testify. Wherefore, we pray that the child, having been buried with Christ, may crucify the old man, *and utterly abolish the whole body of sin*, and that as *he is made* partaker of the death—so a disciple—of the Son of God, he may also be partaker of his resurrection, *and that the rest of his life may be according to this beginning*. So, then, baptism does not bestow grace. No sign bestows grace any more than the fruit of a tree bestows the sap. God has never given a sign without having first given the thing signified. His covenant revealed in Christ Jesus was set up perfect from the beginning (Heb. xi.), and has continued unchanged and unaltered, with all men, and throughout all time.

To make men disciples, to lead them into the clear apprehension and *demonstration* of those distinctive truths, of which baptism is the sign and seal, is the obligation that meets us on the threshold of every dispensation. The baptism into Christ precedes that of the Holy Ghost. This is the order, as the Lord taught, when he said, John *truly* baptized with water, but ye shall—when my death shall be a reality with you—be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

Peter, referring to the days of Noah, says, Few—that is, eight souls—were saved by water—the waters of the flood destroyed the world. The ark—symbolical of a Triune God, the true and only rest for man—represented man so resting, borne up by that very power that was destroying the *carnal nature*, as it lay *buried* under the waters of the flood. The like figure, he says, even baptism, doth also now save us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, not the one thing only—not a death to sin only, but also the answer of a good conscience *in* God.

And with respect to the Mosaic dispensation, Paul, while testifying to the one object of his life, to obtain an incorruptible crown, says, I must *keep under my body* and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means after I have preached to others I myself should be a castaway. Addressing his brethren, who had lost sight of this, he asks, Are you ignorant how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized into Moses? The cloud put from them their enemies, and the water destroyed them: so were they redeemed from their carnal nature, represented by the destruction of Pharaoh and his hosts, when Israel, as a spiritual seed, would serve God. They could not walk in the statutes and commandments of God without realising this deliverance; and so were taught by the cloud and the sea that they were delivered from that in which they were held.

And when our great Exemplar, bearing witness to his own Gospel, came to be baptized, what did he say? He uttered words explanatory of his baptism, and however simple and straightforward they appear, we do not get a satisfactory explanation of them. Thus, he said—Thus, it becometh us, *in order to* fulfil all righteousness. It was no empty sign with him. His death and burial must be a reality in us before his righteousness can work in us.

And now his command is, Baptize into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Much stress is generally laid upon the term “name.” It refers to the plural Hebrew term *Elohim*, the sworn or Covenant Ones, and the Lord explains it. The whole formula is identical with that pronounced to Moses, Jehovah, the *Elohim* of Abraham, the *Elohim* of Isaac, the *Elohim* of Jacob. Matthew here gathers up the whole Gospel, and

according to this expressive form, we are to be baptized, and so made disciples. We carry his cross and follow him.

“Into the name.” In Scripture, a name signifies what it is, of which it is the expression. To be baptized *into* the name is more than to be called by it. The Lord was most desirous that he should be received in the name of the Father. I am come, he said, in my Father’s name, and the works that I do bear witness of me. As the Father knoweth me, so know I the Father; believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me. Thus, he came in the Father’s name. So the disciples went forth in his name. They, then, had believed *into* him. In my name they shall cast out devils, speak with new tongues, lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. James writes, Take, my brethren, the prophets that speak *in the name* of the Lord, as an example of long-suffering affliction and patience. Of whom Peter writes, they searched what, and what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which should follow. Thus, “in the name of the Lord,” and to possess the Spirit of Christ, are identical. John, drawing the Gospel to a close, says, These things are written that thou mightest believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and believing, mightest have *life in his name*. Elsewhere he writes, This is the record, God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son; he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. So, then, to have life in his name is identical with possessing the Son of God.

To be baptized, then, into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is to be filled with the fulness of God: for he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, hath both the Father and the Son.

20. This promise, had it been restricted to the immediate disciples, could not have had its fulfilment, for it would have been physically impossible for them to have gone through all nations. It is a promise to all who go forth testifying to the things the Lord commanded. It is no barren or empty promise, but one which every faithful servant will find to be truly Yea, and Amen, in Christ Jesus, to the glory of God the Father. But what is the promise? It is in no apostolical succession, but in a con-

tinuance of the covenant according to the promise made to the Patriarch (Gen. xxviii. 15)—and so, identical with that made to Moses, and implied in the very names of a Covenant God, I AM—the ever present One, the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac, the Elohim of Jacob. So, then, the Apostles went forth, the Lord working with them; and they spake boldly by him, who gave testimony to the words of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands. The promise of the Lord implied that he reigned over all, having power over all; and as the Apostles entered into the manifest experience of this promise, so should all testify to it.

And here, in the last verses, as in the first, Matthew, in unmistakeable characters, shows the universal character of the Gospel. A degraded Jew, a publican, now converted to Christianity, with his Jewish prejudices swept away, he presents truly a soil congenial for the Gospel to take root. All are redeemed, all are blessed, and the gracious Lord still goes forth working, and bids us work with him, as children, sons of God, shining lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. And this we do as we realise our interest in a universal redemption, and bear our testimony to the faithfulness of God, in the Spirit of the Son, crying, Abba, Father.

APPENDIX A. (PAGE 109.)

MATT. v. 3.

THE word *πτωχος*, poor, signifies one in extreme poverty, and, in order to obtain a clear apprehension of its real value, we must trace the distinction between it and *πενης*, with which, in many parts of the Old Testament, the Psalms especially, it is found connected. The distinction comes out in the Hebrew equivalents :

לָקוּ—*πτωχος*, is one exhausted, wasted, and weak in substance and natural strength ; חָסֵר—*πενης*, is one who lacks, suffers want ; and it signifies also, in one form of the verb, to feign oneself poor.

The line between the two Greek words may be found in the New Testament, in the parable of the widow casting her two mites into the treasury. Archb. Trench observes, "In both these words the sense of poverty, and of poverty in this world's goods, is involved ; . . . the *πενης* is so poor that he earns his bread by daily labour ; the *πτωχος* is so poor that he obtains his living only by begging. The *πτωχος* has nothing ; the *πενης* has nothing superfluous." In the Hebrew synonyms this line between exhaustion consequent on long suffering and want, and the healthy tone of a feeling of need, is more rigidly defined.

The word *πτωχος*, of which we have already ascertained the true value, is frequently found in the Old and New Testaments, and lifted into the region of spiritual things, it performs a very important and conspicuous part. It will be as well, therefore, to trace its relation to other words which move with it in respect to spiritual truths and experience. Its substantive expresses more frequently than any other word the calamities and afflictions of Job. The word "affliction" (Job xxx. 16—27) is the rendering for both *οδυνη* and *πτωχεια*. These words here being used indifferently, the former would be, in the excessive grief and deep sorrow of the heart, the expression of the latter. These two

Greek words are given in the LXX as the equivalent for the Hebrew 'עַן, affliction, oppression, suffering, misery, which, with its verb עָנָה, and adjective 'עַן, is found nearly one hundred times in the Old Testament. It signifies to afflict and to be afflicted—to humble self and to be humbled, by whatever means—to submit and to be chastened.

The Greek correspondents are *κακω*, *ταπεινω*, *θλιβω*, and *πτωσσω*, with their substantives and adjectives. The first respects evil as such, both to body and soul. (Acts. xii. 1; Ps. lxxxix. 22.) And the prophet, predicting the hostility of his countrymen to Christ, whom they accused of being in league with evil, says, "We esteemed him afflicted." (Is. liii. 4, 7.) The second expresses one conscious of evil, humbled, brought low, and distressed by it. The Jews were commanded to *afflict* their souls on the day of atonement. (Lev. xvi. 29, 31.) And in respect of which Jehovah asks, "Is it for a day that a man is to afflict his soul?" (Is. lviii. 5.) Whereas, to the truly afflicted the consolation is promised—Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord has comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted. (Is. xlix. 13.)

The third signifies a narrowing or pressing down. The previous word conveys the idea of the way of righteousness; while this, the accessory idea, how that that way admits of no iniquity, that it is a narrow way, a way of affliction. (Matt. vii. 14.)

The fourth, *πτωχος*, derived from *πτωσσω*, to tremble, to shake with fear, includes all that the other words express. The believer passes through all before he can be a *πτωχος*, or poor. He is one exhausted (so to speak) through terrible conflicts, yet in the Spirit is he sustained and supported. He knows the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and forsakes it. Thus is he truly humbled under the mighty hand of God. Yet he is exposed to all the assaults of the enemy. He feels his own weakness, proneness to evil, and calls upon his God, saying, Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our affliction? (Ps. xliv. 24; and lxxxviii. 9, 15,) and particularly in the title of the one hundred and second Psalm as the standing ground of the *πτωχος* before God. All of which is explained by the prophet (Is. xlvi. 10), Behold, says Jehovah, I have refined thee; I have chosen thee in the furnace of *affliction*.

The consecrated furnace, while it witnesses to the perfect providence of God, purges away all the dross of earthly-mindedness. It is to the glory of God and to the blessedness of the believer that it should be so. To be chosen in the furnace of affliction is to be indeed πτωχος.

The Lord knew well the value and import of this word. It expresses the condition of soul that shall most truly exhibit the fruit of the tree of life. The place here had reference, doubtless, to David's song of praise, wherein it distinguishes the children of God. The people, the afflicted, thou wilt save. (2 Sam. xxii. 28.)

Christ, when his soul was in the deep waters (Ps. xxii.), cried unto God, and was heard in that he feared. I will, he said, declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. Ye that fear the Lord, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel. For he hath not despised nor abhorred the *affliction* of the *afflicted*; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard: and blessed are such, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.

APPENDIX B. (PAGE 201.)

MATT. vii. 3.

Apollonii Rhodii Argonautica. Schäf., Vol. ii., 206.

Thomas Mag. p. 246, τὸ δοκὸς ἐπὶ θηλυκοῦ ἀρσενικοῦ εὔρηται temerè, ut opinor, contradicentibus viris doctis ad Lucian T. ii. p. 105. Diogenes, Laërt. v. sect. 81—Περὶ τοῦ δοκοῦ ἁ Interpres.; De trabe, imans. Rossius Commentat. Laërt. p. 88, sq.—“δοκος de quo Laërtius, est ignis in speciem trabis emicans, à qua nomen accipit, pertinens ad genus τῶν μετεωρῶν seu τῶν μεταρσῶν.” Hesychius T. i. c. 1018—δοκοὶ εἶδος ἀστερέων (Ἀστερες h. i. non stellæ quæ proprie dicuntur, sed meteora ignea, qua significatione ἀστὴρ sæpius legitur. V. Apollon. Rhod. iii. v. 1377, ibique Schol. Ruhnken Epist. Crit. p. 24, et Siebelis ad Philochori Fragmenta, p. 80). Citat ibi Albertus e Sylburgii Saracenici, p. 73—ἐφάνη κατὰ μεσημβρίαν (Homer Hymn in Apoll. v. 441, μεσῶ ἡματι quod perperam interpretatur Ruhnken i. c. recte Ilgenius, p. 338), ἀστὴρ, ὁ λεγόμενος δοκιτῆς et p. 101, καὶ ἐφάνη σημεῖον ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ

μεσημβριαν, ὁ λεγόμενος δοκιτης inde in Lexica infer δοκιτης (Item: diminutivum δοκιον ε Diodoro Sic. xviii. c. 42, ubi ταις σειραις, i.e., loris mire vertitur catenis). Obiter moneo in Dionysii Nat. Antiquit. Rom. iii. c. 68, e libro Vaticano Scribendum esse—τε ως γαρ έστωτες έθεώρουν επ ικριοις δοκῶν ξυλίναις σκηναις επικειμένων.

Thus Schäfer produces abundant authority for δοκος as a beam of light, yet, as in his last citation, it may be rendered a beam of wood.

APPENDIX C. (PAGE 203.)

MATT. vii. 5 ; xxi. 31 ; xxiii. 26.

If the law of God be the law of our life (Rom. viii. 1, 2), we cannot take the ground of him who would deal with the social sores of the body politic by the laws of man. He who truly loves man says, *Make the tree good*, and its fruit will be good. Whatever we may do with respect to the fruit—the outcoming of a tree—it will in nowise affect the tree itself. So, whatever may be done with respect to the outward body or trunk of a tree, it will never make it good or minister a good sap to it. This must come from the root. Christ is our Root. He is crucified and buried—the mustard seed, the hid treasure. In him, as the tree, all are gathered, and he, as the hid treasure, is possessed by the believer—we in him and he in us.

A schoolmaster may coerce, correct, discipline a child, but he will never bring him *into* Christ. No outward constraints, no threatenings, no punishment of the flesh, of the old Adam nature, will ever bring a man into Christ, for if he will not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will he be persuaded though one rose from the dead. (Luke xvi. 31.) All the law was *of the Father*, and, as an outward testimony, it was *a child leader* into Christ (παιδαγωγος εις Χριστον).

Nothing in nature is so striking as a tree to represent man. There were two in the garden of Eden as representing the two great types of the human family—the tree of life, and the tree *of the knowledge* of good and evil.

Everyone, apart from Christianity, must abhor those two most fearful sores in the body politic, drunkenness and unchastity ; yet

they are only motes, and give unmistakeable evidence of the presence of the beam. Then, what is to be said of the Temperance movement, which has for its one object, to make drunkards abstainers, and which seeks legislation in order to deprive men of the facilities of obtaining drink? And what of those who would legislate for the other abomination? Do they not confound sins with sin? Sin is the beam, and sins, of whatever dye, are only motes. We are emphatically taught to let sins alone until we have first dealt with sin. The Pharisee deals only with sins, and he does so with the outward law of God, and what is the result? The law becomes the strength of sin. Whereas Christianity—that according to Christ, and not man's counterfeit—says, Take out the beam from thine own eye, put off the corrupt nature in Christ, and then shalt *thou see clearly* how to take the mote from thy brother's eye. You will then not pull at the mote, for if you do, you will judge and condemn your brother, and not sin.

Then, would it not be better, from Christ's point of view, to let drunkenness and impurity alone, for *as sins* they give unmistakeable evidence of the presence of sin, which must first be dealt with. Every besetting sin is indeed a *facile* habit of sin, which is to be overcome only by an unyielding struggle with sin, which we overcome in Christ, even as he overcame.

The judgment of God upon all flesh, in the world's deluge, was because it had corrupted its way upon the earth. It ate and drank, it married and gave in marriage—things indeed lawful, yet they show how the people of that time lived only to the flesh—ungodly. But now, drunkenness and unchastity would unmistakeably show how that those who were guilty of these sins were living in the flesh, which, with all its boasted progress and refinement, is become more depraved, and is calling down the wrath of God, not because of these individual manifestations, but because of sin itself undisturbed in the heart of those who would pull the mote out of a brother's eye, and see not the beam in their own. We no more uproot sin by putting away these outward abominations, than we uproot a tree by plucking off its fruit, or by lopping off its branches.

He, then, that is a teetotaller or abstainer upon religious grounds, should clearly understand his position. He is bound

to crucify, not merely one manifestation of the flesh, but the flesh itself, the corrupt source altogether. He, then, is in Christ; Christ crucified is a reality within. The kingdom of God is established in him, and he has the righteousness of God in the Son, and the law of it works as guiding and directing him in all the will of God. He then obeys an *inward* law, or inward principle, *consequent upon the crucifixion of the flesh*, and he will be free to act accordingly. But if an outward law or restraint be applied, *then there must be a condition*, which is the uncrucified nature in all its strength, in order to make this outward law or restraint applicable; so, the cross of Christ is made of none effect.

The Lord Jesus expressed his utter contempt for any such dealing with the old Adam nature, as he said concerning the *civilized* Laodicæans, Because ye are neither hot nor cold, I will spue you out of my mouth. (Rev. iii. 15, 16.) Signifying that they were only the filth of the flesh.

APPENDIX D. (PAGE 541.)

MATT. xxii. 14.

Predestination, according to the Word of God, is calculated to afford the utmost consolation to all men; while the erroneous teachings in respect to it have contributed more to encourage the sneer of the infidel, to dissolve the bond of Christian charity, and to obliterate the characteristics of Gospel simplicity than anything else.

The different views of Romanists, Schoolmen, Calvinists, and Lutherans—differing from each other, and all from the truth—have been propounded (*Laurence's Bampton Lectures*). The Romanist makes the favour of God dependent on good works. The Schoolmen, while they took somewhat of the same ground, yet made it rest in the foreknowledge of God, as to what the creature would be; and so, accordingly, he would bestow his grace. The Calvinist maintains that God, in the exercise of his foreknowledge, pre-ordained some to eternal happiness, and the rest to eternal destruction. While the Lutheran teaches that it is not of individuals, but of a Church, contemplated in its aggre-

gate in Christ, and for Christ's sake alone. Now, it is not the election of individuals, as the result of a blind chance, nor of a condition in time foreseen, nor of a capricious arbitrary will, nor of those who are baptized into a visible society, and who afterwards, in the exercise of faith, become the adopted heirs of heaven. These four distinct theories have, indeed, found staunch advocates, who would maintain their respective views with some appearance of truth—views, indeed, of men of mighty intellects, who yet distort the truth out of mere opposition, or from judgments based on the traditions of former ages. But, whether or no, the Word of God abideth, and while, in the Father's good pleasure, it reveals its treasures, not to the wise and prudent, but to *babes*, it presents, nevertheless, a common ground, whereon, in no exclusive form, it reveals the truth, and declares emphatically that God has predestinated *all men into life*. For there is no difference: God is no respecter of persons. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, Paul lifts up his soul in praise to God, the Father, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, because he has opened wide the flood-gates of mercy, and blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenlies in Christ. The eternal purpose of the Father was, that all might be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the *πρωτοτοκος* among many brethren. This purpose was independent of sin, death, and Hades, and therefore, despite of these, it stands. He has, therefore, according to his eternal purpose, which he purposed in himself, revealed himself throughout all time, and now, in the dispensation, which is of the fulfilment of times, he has gathered under one head *all things* in Christ—all things that are in heaven, and that are in earth, even in him. (Eph. i. 10.) Here is the meeting-place. Here Jehovah meets the creature. We are, therefore, called, not only by the eternal purpose that created us in adoption to reveal the Father, but also by what is done in the *economy* of grace, in the fulness of time in Christ, to be found in him, *in whom we execute judgment*, and put away all that is not of the Father: so we obey the call in Christ. Having, then, first trusted in Christ, we are, according to the eternal purpose, according to predestination, sealed with the Spirit of promise, the earnest of our inheritance.

In another place, Paul describes the heavenlies:—predestina-

tion, calling, made righteous, glorification (Rom. viii. 30); according as he hath called us out in Christ, before the foundation of the world, to be before him, *holy and without blame in love*. (Eph. i. 4.) This is man's condition in the eternal purpose. Having then predestinated us into the adoption of children, according to the good pleasure of his will, he hath made us accepted in the Beloved. This predestination, then, is of all men. Did the Father give his well-beloved Son for *us all*? Did Christ taste death for every man? Then, why? The Father was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, because he had, according to the good pleasure of his will, before all creation, predestinated all men into life, therefore redemption and life is the normal condition of man. His will was independent of any circumstance in time, and before the creature could do any good or evil: as it is written, He created man for a little while lower than the angels, to crown him with honour and glory. This predestination to life, then, is the birthright of every man born into this world. Wherefore it must be declared to all without any mental reservation whatsoever. And so, according to his will, does his grace abound to every man in Christ Jesus. For in Christ we all have redemption, through his blood the forgiveness of sins, *according to the riches of his grace*. And they who obey the truth, know this great mystery in all the fulness of its blessings—they first trust in Christ, and are then sealed with the Spirit of promise. Then shall any rob his fellow-man of his birthright? Shall he circumscribe the grace of God wherein he hath abounded to us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us what is his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself, that, in the dispensation of the fulfilment of times, he might gather together in one *all things* in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him? Can words be clearer or more comprehensive? Yet they are darkened by human conceit and prejudice. Does not the Lord himself, in the words with which he concludes this parable, establish the truth? They are twice uttered (Matt. xix. 30; xxii. 14), and they comprehend in the intermediate space, as in their scope, the flower of the apostolic band, the high priests and scribes, the publicans and harlots. So, then, whatever be the position, condition, or circumstance of life, all are in one common condemnation, as they reject

the elective love of God. The message is one. All are called, and Peter, James, and John are taught that, notwithstanding their great and distinctive privileges, which place them as first, they may be as last, when the outcasts of society go in before them. We are all called in Christ to be sons, and if we do not see our miserable condition, ever bartering away our birthright for the mess of pottage, we, though first, shall be last.

It is said that it is with the Calvinistic theory that predestination is come to be identified (*Laurence's Bampton Lectures*); that it is to his people only that the Father gives that healing which is effectual; that his love is at once sovereign and elective—in other words, arbitrary and capricious; and that it is only those whom he distinguishes by his purpose in Christ that are indeed his children in the highest sense. We must not force, say they, the parable of the prodigal son into a universal application, or it will contradict other passages, such as Matt. vii. 23; Luke xiii. 27, 28; John x. 26; 1 Cor. ix. 22, 23; 2 Tim. ii. 19, 21. Of course it would, but who cannot fail to perceive that it is no arbitrary will or decree, but paternal love that draws back the prodigal into the bosom not of a sovereign but of a Father, who, as a king, has removed the obstacle and cause of alienation. And it is universal in its tendency, else God mocks man in revealing himself as a Father, rejoicing over a returning sinner, when sinners cannot return unto him. Where is there a father, full of paternal love and solicitude, who would not most truly welcome to his embrace the humble and contrite one who was lost and dead to all the attractive power of the paternal love and character? But we are told that the parable portrays a penitent, because an elected, sinner—the type of one apprehended by the mercy of God—effectually called by the Spirit of God, and whom the Father goes forth to meet, because in his sovereignty he loved him with an everlasting love. The sovereignty does not love; but can there be anything more defamatory of the paternal character than to say, that the gracious and persuasive aspect of this parable, and all other such general and loving expressions are to be continually in the heart of the sinner, yet, if saved, he is so only by the distinguishing grace of God, whilst others no more guilty perish? But if we ask, Why is it so?—why are they thus everlastingly banished from the presence of the Father as an in-

evitable fate?—why are they condemned and passed by notwithstanding the death on Calvary?—why this second death and everlasting wrath as an inevitable decree upon any sinner?—their only answer is, It is written; and they refer again to Rom. ix. 20, 22; 2 Pet. ii. 9; 2 Thess. i. 6, 10.

No wonder that there is, then, a strong prejudice against this doctrine, since pride and conceit arrogate an exclusive sense. For what is it but to take to oneself exclusively what is for all.

The term election has a prominence and importance in the sacred writings, and it is there for the edification of all men. And although a humiliating truth, it is a comforting one. Let who will partake of the holiness of God and experience his love, he will ever feel that because of it there works in his members the law of sin and death. For not to do what is commanded of us, not to do according to the predestinating will of the Father, is condemnation.

Let us now turn and briefly consider some of the passages referred to, as the stronghold of Calvinism, against the universal tendency of the parable of the prodigal returning to the feast now ready, and to which all men are invited. We are told that they who love God have been called according to his purpose. True; but what do they mean? They answer, He *infallibly* completes his purpose by an effectual calling according to the statement of the Apostle. (Rom. viii. 29, &c.) In this all the verbs are in the past tense. God, then, has glorified those whom he predestinated. But how shall this be applied to those yet unborn? Are they glorified in reality? Now, God has predestinated, made righteous, glorified all men. And the call, therefore, is to all men to obey, to realise this election. And so far from a restricted or exclusive sense having existence here, the Apostle asks, He that spared not his own Son, but gave him up for *us all*, how will he not, with him, freely give us *all things*? It is for all that Christ is given; then, co-extensively with this, are all glorified in the Son. This is the mystery of the Father's will. Then, every one obeying the truth is made conformable to Christ in suffering and in holiness, witnessing to a universal truth, applicable to all. Thus the Apostle argues, Hath God cast off his people? God forbid; for I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. An accumulation of truths expressing the same thing in

the mind of the Apostle—he was a true Israelite, in whom the flesh was kept under; the seed of the Father, a son of his right hand.

Another passage is perverted to vindicate what is called the sovereignty of God. In Rom. ix. 19—24, the Apostle makes the proud, selfish, narrow-minded Jew speak, who, though chosen to witness to the truth, now finds fault because the Gentile is admitted to equal privileges, and saying, Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will? It may be asked, in reply, Does not a narrow exclusiveness? Does not a particular election? *O man!* exclaims the Apostle, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the *thing formed* say to him that formed it, Why hast thou *made me* thus? Such is the spirit that would arrogate to itself some especial consideration, and answers when reproved. But the Apostle continues, Hath not the potter power over the clay of *the same lump*—Jew and Gentile are of the same lump—to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour? The Jew was called out by God—in redemption, in judgment, by his right hand—separated from other nations, and so *outwardly* made vessels of honour. And what for? Surely not because they were better than others, not to teach a narrow exclusiveness, but rather to witness to the *universal* truth, that all the families of the earth might be blessed. Did they obey the call? No. Then, is God's long-suffering endurance of them to be an argument on the lips of the narrow-minded elected one to defeat his purpose? Not so, says the Apostle, but to show his wrath and make his purpose known on vessels of wrath, prepared for destruction, be they Egyptian, Jew, or Gentile, and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles. The Father had before willed all to partake of his glory, but the Jew resisted; then, instead of being vessels of honour, as *outwardly* witnessing to the great verities of the kingdom, they became vessels of dishonour, trodden under foot of the Gentiles. Wherefore he is not vindicating God's sovereignty, but cutting down the Jewish pride and exclusive spirit in its most dominant form. He tells them what is a true election, and how the purpose of God, according to election, stands. Not of works, *not of the flesh*, but of God that calleth, as he explains: It was said unto Rebecca, when in

her womb were two manner of people, that the elder should serve the younger—this is God's judgment—this is God's calling to all men, the elder *nature* should serve the younger ; as it is written : Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated. Jacob, notwithstanding his inconsistencies, was the Old Testament representative of the spiritual nature—the new man who loves his birthright ; while Esau, of the carnal nature, which ever in its unchanging enmity despises it, sells it for its own mess of pottage. God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy. No man shall restrict the mercy of God. Then, if man rejects this mercy, he will harden. Mercy must act ; if, then, we are not partakers of it, it hardens us, and God, if he sees fit, will raise up any such, that through him he may manifest his mighty, redeeming hand, vindicating his mercy in destroying all that is hostile to it.

If, then, we are elect *according to the foreknowledge of God* (1 Pet. i. 2), we realise the Father's purpose to all ; and it must be through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. The Spirit applies the things of Christ, in whom we are made holy, which state of holiness is obedience of the call ; and the sprinkling of the blood, in which is the life, is the symbol of a partaking of the divine life in the Spirit. So, then, the condition of election is here intensified by the two pairs of truths just cited. The Lord Jesus, in his prayer (John xvii.), states not only that the Father hath given him power over *all flesh*, but that he should give life to as many as he had given him—even to all flesh. He prays not for the world ; for it, as the world, he cannot, for it resists the truth ; but he prays for them who obey it, witnessing how that the Father had given him power over all flesh.

Again, it is said of Lydia and of the Philippian jailor, that they believed because of the Holy Ghost, given specially and exclusively to convince and convert them. But if it be asked, Why did not Felix or Agrippa believe the powerful testimony of the servant of God, who reasoned of temperance, righteousness, and judgment to come, the answer is, "We cannot tell." They, who say so, forget that the writer of the four narratives of Lydia, the Jailor, Felix, and Agrippa, has in the same book stated, as the foundation for all Christian efforts, that the Spirit is poured out upon all flesh, testified in a wonderful manner

when men *in every language and in every tongue* spoke of the wonderful works of God. And, further, why men do not believe; because they do always resist the Holy Ghost, both before and after Christ. It is man's awful prerogative to do this. Then let us, professing to know the whole counsel of God, to be the interpreters of his Word, never say "We cannot tell" when asked concerning what is revealed.

APPENDIX E. (PAGE 588.)

MATT. xxiv. 28.

The following was, as a letter, sent to the "Press" in October last, and inserted:—

"In a great house there are vessels of honour and of dishonour. Then how are we to read the present crisis through which the world is now passing?"

"When the Word of God is disobeyed, God reveals himself in his perfect providence, and if this bring not man back to the Word, then Nature steps forward, and in all her laws, with trumpet-tongue, speaks to him. The whole creation being made subject to vanity, groaneth and travaileth with pain, is in her birth-throes, *ἀποκατάδοκία*. At this crisis she halts, waiting the manifestation of the sons of God, as if she was thus forcing man to take his proper place. (Rom. viii. 19, &c.)

"The Word of God is not glorified, and God is now speaking in his providence to every man in the civilized world. And when the din of war shall cease, it will be seen that, as the Word is disobeyed, and a perfect providence is disregarded, science will progress until Nature shall yield all her secrets, resulting in no honour, but to the filling up of the flesh.

"How, then, are we to read the providence of God in the terrible war which is now desolating some of the fairest portions of the earth?"

"When God revealed his wonders in Egypt, the Israelites and Egyptians were respectively vessels of honour and of dishonour, to reveal God's covenant in redemption and blessing—*so representing the two natures in every man*. The Egyptians were destroyed as the house of bondage—the flesh; *then* the Israelites, as the spiritual seed, went up to serve God in the wilderness

(see pp. 71, 72). They visibly represented the church, but instead of embracing the invisible reality, they rested in its shadows, and continued in their Egyptian nature; so that their incense was only an abomination—*βδέλυγμα*—before God. (Is. i. 13.) God then brought down upon them the Chaldæans. It was a call to cleanse the temple, even their own hearts. Then in the second visitation it was as the final judgment—their city was destroyed, and they were cast out, a by-word and reproach.

“All this has a more extended application. In the days of Noah, *the lust of the flesh* brought on the crisis of the world’s flood, and yet it, notwithstanding God’s judgment, so dominated, that God revealed himself, executing judgment upon Egypt. Then *the lust of the eyes*, in a sensuous religion, was overthrown by Christ, who nailed it to his cross; yet it, notwithstanding this, so dominated, that God again revealed himself against the Jews in destroying the excellency of *their* strength, the desire of their eyes, in the overthrow of Jerusalem, and the destruction of the temple. Now *the pride of life*—intellectualism, notwithstanding the Word, has had free course in all the world, dominates over it, and God is now revealing himself against it as he has done against the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes—the three distinguishing and essential characteristics of the colossal man, whom Jesus will destroy with the brightness of his coming.

“God has hitherto led the hosts of Germany against those of France, and without a check. But why against France? No place so truly represents the world as its Capital. Paris, then, identified with all that is gratifying to the flesh—pleasure-loving, sensuous in religion, and licentious in intellect—is the world. Its ruler is a captive, and it must fall. But why are the Germans here vessels of honour to reveal the judgment of God? Because they go forth as one man for king and fatherland—words expressing the spiritual work of Jesus, who came to overthrow the enemies of God and man. Thus God is, in his providence, revealing himself, and so sending men back to his Word.

“Then let the Germans learn by the Chaldæans of old not to impose their own yoke; but reveal the true King and the true Fatherland, lest they hasten on, to their own confusion, the advent of him, who, at his coming, will put away all that offendeth and maketh a lie.”

Now, on the very day we commemorate the great salvation, there appears in the leading Press of this country the following:—
 “We are compelled to believe what we see; yet we can scarcely conceive how the momentary paralysis of the constituted authority should have been sufficient so to undermine the basis of society, as at once to turn the most polished community (Paris) into an unredeemed pandemonium.” (*Times*, April 7, 1871.)

And what will be the condition of the world when the grace of God shall leave it to fill up the measure of its iniquity. Can we read it in more fearful language than that which describes Paris—the type of the world? “Paris dies, and does not surrender She is a prey to a mad set of criminals, who are responsible to no man, who have nothing to hope, and whom nothing can redeem from their fears. ‘They fight with halters round their necks.’ The choice for them lies between being shot like men, and being hanged like dogs. How the capital of a great country, with two millions of highly civilized beings, could come into the power of such desperate wretches—how she could find it impossible to shake off their tyranny, and regain the mastery over her destinies—may well be a wonder to the present, and also future, generations; but the fact is before us undeniable, if inexplicable.” (*Times*, April 11, 1871.)

Is not God, in all this, revealing himself? Does he not make manifest to every man what is in the *heart of man*?—yea, in the heart of every man in all the world?—therefore, in that of the “most civilized beings in the world.” And do we not hereby learn, that when he shall withdraw the light of his countenance, and leave man to fill up the measure of his iniquity, how that common nature, that “knows not Jehovah,” will, throughout the coming ages of eternity, “not surrender,” nor be subject to him.

Bearing in mind that God is revealing invisible realities, and that he has no respect of persons; then, in interpreting his glorious truths, we have nothing to do with individuals, however distinguished, but to see God working through and by them to his own glory and man’s eternal well-being. Then, as the Jews were vessels of honour, and afterwards of dishonour, so may be any nation or individual.

The seer of Patmos, in the seventeenth chapter of the Revelation, writes, There came one of the *seven* angels which had the

seven vials—attesting the *covenant* in holiness and judgment—and talked to me, saying unto me, Come hither ; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters. She is also carried by the beast that hath *seven heads* and *ten horns*.

The great whore, sitting on *many* waters, is a very expressive and striking description of her. Water is the symbol of Christ—the water from above (John iii. 8 : Heb. vi. 7), the pool of Siloam (John ix. 11). But this figure signifies the *many* forms of religion—the many Antichrists that are come into the world. And as the great whore, the mother of harlots, she would, in these many forms, counterfeit the bride of Christ. Being, then, not the body of Christ, she can never cleanse herself, notwithstanding her many waters, from all her abominations. She is what she is, a counterfeit of the true.

No language is too strong to express Jehovah's abhorrence of that which is highly esteemed among men. Who, then, is the beast ? It is the old Adam, the Cain, the Ishmael, the Esau nature, which God hates. What a fearful picture does this present to us of the mystery now working in the world ! The beast has seven heads and ten horns. By the former it would claim all that the covenant reveals (Is. xiv. 14) ; by the latter all power (Luke iv. 6). And it is this beast that carries the woman : they are one. With this woman the kings of the earth commit fornication. Instead, as shadows of the True, witnessing to Christ in the overthrowing of all that is not of the Father, they are, in the most expressive language, one with the beast and the woman.

The mighty influences that have, throughout all time, been working, are here made intelligible. We know that the covenant is everlasting, so that the truth has ever been one, as Heb. xi. clearly shows. We know, further, that the history of the world has been the unfolding, according to Eve's prediction, of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, as the fruit of it (page 79). While we thus trace the truth and its opposite, we are brought face to face with the mystery of Babylon the great. No language can describe it ; it is the great *confusion*, as set forth in the beast, the woman, and the kings of the earth, as one.

“There are seven kings—five are fallen, and one is ; the other is

not yet come, and when he cometh he must continue a short space. And the beast that was and is not, even he is the eighth, *and is of the seventh*, and goeth into perdition."

Who, then, are the five kings that are fallen. The first is Egypt, which Jehovah, as King, destroyed. The second is Assyria, which fell in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. The third is Babylon, destroyed in the fifth year of Belshazzar. The fourth is Persia, destroyed by Alexander. The fifth is Greece, which, at Alexander's death, was divided into four kingdoms, which were subsequently overcome by, or submitted to, the Roman. All these are mentioned in the Word. The sixth, that which now is (when the Apocalypse was written), is Rome, which was afterwards overrun by the Goths. All these had committed fornication with the woman, and are fallen. In all this we see simply the mystery working in opposition to the Christ, the Son of God—who is the true King, and who has the true bride. (Rom. vii. 5.)

But who is the seventh? It is the Empire of the West, in Charlemagne. He was the Emperor of Germany. He continued for a short space, and committed fornication with the woman. "The empire of Charlemagne comprehended, with the exception of the larger part of the Spanish peninsula and Great Britain, all those kingdoms which, down to a comparatively recent period, have mingled in the politics of Europe. They seem, as it were, to have been qualified, by being the subjects of the Western Empire, to become members of the great Christian union. When they ceased to be united under one temporal monarchy, and when the successors to the imperial dignity of Charlemagne had shrunk into the sovereigns of the Germanic league, they still owned one spiritual dominion, and were, to a certain degree, held together by the religious supremacy of the popes. For it was the Italian conquests of Pepin and Charlemagne, and their close alliance with the Roman see, which permanently opened the whole of Europe to the domination of the Vatican. The popes stood on a new footing when they were recognised as the fathers of the Christian world by its acknowledged lord. The coronation of Charlemagne at Rome, not merely invested him with the traditionary reverence, which seemed still to be inseparable from the mantle of the Cæsars, but re-established Rome, as it were, as the capital, the chief seat of dignity in the western world, though the court of

the emperor was still held at Aix-la-Chapelle, or Paderborn, or Worms. The indefinite pretensions of the Roman pontiff to the religious allegiance of the nations were, for a time, at least, strengthened by his becoming a territorial sovereign; and the ecclesiastical supremacy of the ancient mistress of the world was, perhaps, almost as influential as the claim of succession to St. Peter in establishing the bishop of Rome as the acknowledged spiritual liege lord of Christendom." (*Quart. Review*, No. XCVI. p. 424.)

The last is the eighth. He is a king, but this distinguishing title appears to be merged in the full development and clear revelation of the beast. "*The eighth is of the seventh.*" Then, who is he? It is remarkable that as the sovereign power, so necessary to the Papacy, departs, and so it was no longer king and father, *a colossal power* arises and goes forth with one cry, for King and Fatherland.

The fall of the Papacy was an unexpected event, and was remarkable as a transition period from that which was truly of the lust of the eyes to that which is the last great epoch—the pride of life. God makes even the wickedness of man to praise him; for while we see on the one hand God revealing himself, we see on the other how, in antagonism to him, the beast is developing himself. We see the lust of the flesh in the lust of conquest and power. We see the lust of the eyes in a piety parading itself in the midst of all that is terrible and horrible in war; and we shall see it in the pride of life, in that intellectualism which is now the bane of Germany; for the kingly power which should attest Christ is merged and lost in this distinguishing feature of the woman with whom the kings of the earth commit fornication as the great development of Eve's prophecy. So we behold the beast; and in the words of the seer of Patmos, say, Here is wisdom, let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666 (see pp. 79 and 88).

Without indulging in vague speculations as to the exact time or year of Christ's advent, we cannot but see that the final great crisis is impending. Can there be a more unmistakeable testimony to it than what we have stated? Yet there are with it other great and broad lines, all converging to the one centre. Not only is the beast fully developing himself as 666, which is

unregenerate man, as one colossal man, as Antichrist, but it is also the fulfilment of Eve's prediction *as the fruit* of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (see p. 71).

APPENDIX F. (PAGE 591.)

MATT. xxiv. 29.

Bishop Sumner, in his charge of 1863, says, "There was certainly a terrible tendency among us to worship wealth, and to make life as far as possible soft and luxurious. The rule of parental authority was never less asserted or adopted than at present. Would to God we could stop there, but he feared there were grounds for the assertion, that the difficulties connected with social relations were in a great degree discouraging, and that the poisonous presence of secret vice was proportionably spreading among the middle and upper classes of society. Among other things he believed it to be true that there had been a great increase in our land of the unnatural wickedness of infanticide. Further, there was an inclination to doubt, and even to deny the presence of any supernatural power acting really among us in the Church of Christ, and to assert that there was no providence, no revelation, and no grace. Our general literature in its whole tone was marked by this characteristic."

APPENDIX G. (PAGE 661.)

MATT. xxvi. 61 ; xxvii. 40.

Why is Jesus to wait three days before he again builds the temple? in other words, why three days before he is raised again? His enemies knew that these three days were significant, as they cried, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself.

In the interpretation of the dreams of the chief baker and the chief butler of Pharaoh (Gen. xl.), the three days are of marked importance. In the baker and the butler—in the former dying,

and the latter being raised again to his former occupation—are represented what the bread and the wine signify, the death and resurrection life of Melchizedek. The death of the baker takes place on the third day for the sake of the “three.” This is not to show that Christ’s death was no sham; nor to prove, according to the creeds, that there was an actual separation of his body and soul; for the death of the baker, and the raising up of the butler to his former place to pour out the wine on the *same* day, would indicate that any day—first, or second—would have been suitable. All is typical of Jesus, who, as the Christ, was made sin, and so died to God; then, having died to sin for all men, he was raised again on the third day, that, as the last Adam, who is a quickening Spirit, he might pour out of the Spirit of life upon all flesh. The “three days,” in the cases of the baker and butler, are prominently set forth as if all was subservient to them. In each *they point to the covenant of a Triune God*. Christ died, and was buried, and rose again on the third day, and so testified to the covenant which thus in judgment puts away sin, and in mercy raises the sinner—for mercy rejoiceth over judgment (Jas. ii. 13)—witnessing to sin and death being put away; and which pours out upon all flesh of the Spirit of life. The covenant then contemplates all men as in it, as partakers of Christ’s death, according to the covenant. Into these three measures of meal—for Christ are these (p. 361), for all are gathered into him—does the woman hide the leaven. Thus the covenant not only provides for man under all the power of the devil, but blesses him with all that is of the Father. Christ then died, and was buried for three days, because of the covenant; and, as the Son of God, he was the life because of the covenant; so he was delivered because of our offences, and raised again because of our being made righteous (Rom. iv. 25), according to the everlasting covenant of God.

THE END.

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